



UPGRADE SPECIALIST IN ANOTHER WORLD

BOOK 02

Endless Sea Of Clouds

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Upgrade Specialist in Another World

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by

Endless Sea Of Clouds

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Synopsis

Just as a gamer found an overpowered skill book called ‘Item Upgrade’ in the hottest virtual reality role-playing game on Earth, something happened to the game’s system, causing his soul to leave his body and go to another dimension. Common sense dictates that he would be born anew then become the greatest overlord of this world by making use of his advanced knowledge. Not in this case! He was already dead. Only some fragments of his soul and that skill book managed to get into that dimension and merge with an ordinary common youngster called Bai Yunfei.

This was the enormous Tianhun continent, where humans could be said to have no limits. There was a group of humans here who could cultivate the power of their own souls then control their bodies, the natural elements and even other people’s souls with that power! These special beings were called — soul cultivators. Come witness how the several fragments of the dead inter-dimensional traveler’s soul and that skill book, which was not governed by the laws of this plane, were going to help Bai Yunfei become a legendary soul cultivator and craftsman!

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Chapter 101: Escaping is Important, Time to Go!

After Bai Yunfei and the others left, the previously empty streets slowly began to fill up with people. The street vendors began to sell their wares again, and in minutes, the entire street was flourishing once more. Plenty of the newcomers could only click their tongues in wonder as they observed the traces of scars on the ground. The ones fortunate enough to have watched the battle puffed their mouths up in pride and began to retell the ‘great show’ they had witnessed.

In a teahouse several hundred meters away, a youth around the age of twenty could be seen seated at a table. Sipping from the cup of tea in his hand, he looked at Bai Yunfei who was walking away with a thoughtful expression.

There was another person standing at his side. This was the shopkeeper of the ‘Hundred Armaments’ who had attended to Bai Yunfei back then.

“Young master, is he a student of the Crafting School?” The shopkeeper carefully asked the pensive youth.

This youth was the eldest son of the Jiang family, Jiang Fan. Not only was he an exceptionally talented man from the Crafting School, he was one of the three disciples of the previous head of the Crafting School along with the current acting head. It was for this reason that there was such a deep relationship between the house of Jiang and the Crafting School.

“I’ve never seen him before but... that graceful-looking spear just now was clearly a soulbound armament...” Jiang Fan’s eyebrows creased together as he explained to the man beside. He also thought to himself. “Is he a part of the newer generation of the Crafting School after I left to gain some experience two years ago? If that’s true, why would he undergo his journey in such a weak

state? And after coming to Stonegroove City, why did he not come visit the house of Jiang? What's more, he even sold so many incomplete soul armaments to us..."

"That's right, I wasn't too sure myself back then. He wasn't willing to confirm it, or say anything much at all." The shopkeeper stooped his back as he nervously spoke. "How could a journeying student of the Crafting School stoop so low to sell his incomplete soul armaments? What's even more strange is the fact that he sold all of his incomplete soul armaments in exchange for the incomplete soul armaments in our store..."

"I only came back home to visit, but when the time comes for when I go back to the school, I'll make sure to ask the others which senseless newcomer went down the mountains without permission..." Jiang Fan thought for a moment before deciding on the proper course of action.

"Then... should we make contact with him? He may very well be the younger generation of students to you, Young Master. Now that he's coming across some troubles, we could..."

"Forget it, let him figure it out himself." Jiang Fan waved his hand. "I can see that he isn't very strong, but that soulbound armament of his is an upper-grade earth-tier one. I can only assume that he is one of the more outstanding students the Crafting School picked up and educated two years ago. Make sure you keep track of what he's up to. As long as nothing big happens, you will do nothing to disturb him."

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With his clothes all nice and clean now, Bai Yunfei continued to walk across two streets, resuming his stroll. Moving as he pleased across the throngs of people, the only difference now was the fact that he was now looking vigilantly around himself as if searching for something.

"I can't be wrong. It has to be that Jing Mingfeng who tried to

frame me. Is this what he meant by ‘revenge’? He’s... really lacking in morals. How could he do this? How bored could you possibly get to think of such a deranged style of revenge!? If not for my strength, then that aunty would have done more than just kill me! To even charge me with the crime of being a ‘pervert’... Jing Mingfeng, you went too far. If we ever meet again, I’ll make sure that I beat you so badly that even your mom won’t recognize you!!”

“But then, proving my innocence to that aunty and woman seems a little hard to do. I said that I would with confidence, but would it really be that easy to find Jing Mingfeng? I can’t just have the two of them wait here while I prove it either...”

“I should be mindful of my surroundings for the next few days. I might even chance upon him again.” Bai Yunfei slowly walked down the path while thinking to himself. “He approached me without a sound earlier... how did he manage to pull that off? Even an ordinary person wouldn’t be able to come near me without me noticing them. He practically had no presence. Is this the family secret of his? A secret that caused an entire family to be wiped out...”

“In short, continue with my original plan. If I try my best to find him, it doesn’t mean I will. If I don’t try to find him...”

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After finding a restaurant to eat lunch in, Bai Yunfei continued his tour around the city and began to sight see all of the interesting spots in the place. Trying out every single thing before buying them, Bai Yunfei seemed as if he was a child placed in a whole new world as he familiarized himself with all sorts of never-before-seen things.

At night, Bai Yunfei returned to the lantern-light streets for several moments. The moon illuminated the city overhead as night began to encroach the city. Slowly, he began to look for an inn to rest for the night.

It was to Bai Yunfei's chagrin that the two inns he had found were both filled to the brim with occupants. Back on the now practically empty streets, the lanterns had already long since been extinguished, meaning that only the moon was left to illuminate the area.

Bai Yunfei had not thought too much about these troubles. Looking up at the starry sky, Bai Yunfei was at peace. The life he was living now finally allowed him to feel what it meant to be 'free'.

"Eh? What's that sound?" As Bai Yunfei was soaking in the evening tranquility, he suddenly heard a commotion occurring a hundred meters away. It was as if there were people trying to run away as fast as they could.

Scanning with his soulsense, Bai Yunfei's eyebrows flew up in surprise, "They're all soul cultivators! Three Soul Sprites, five Soul Warriors, and over ten Soul Personages! Just what in the world is happening for there to be so many gathered here, and running through the night no less?"

"Eh? That's not right. They look as if they're chasing someone. This feeling... why is it so familiar, and where did I have this feeling before..." Bai Yunfei was taken back. The soul cultivator running at the front had given him a feeling of *deja vu*, but he couldn't put his finger to it, "It's almost as if..."

In his moment of confusion, the figure suddenly came into view after rounding a corner rather haphazardly. It was with an alarmed face that the person met eyes with Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei's eyes flew open with unfathomable astonishment. Crying out in alarm, he spoke, "Me?!"

Because of the moonlight, he could clearly see that the person running at such a high speed was a shocking look-a-like of himself!

"What's going on?" Bai Yunfei's head had gone blank for a

moment before instantly snapping back to awareness. Roaring with fury, he shouted, “I’ll nail your lungs to the wall, Jing Mingfeng, it’s you!”

He had suddenly remembered just why there was such a familiar air to this soulforce — it was Jing Minfeng! That was the reason why everything looked so familiar now, it was that disguising ability of Jing Mingfeng.

Snapping back to awareness, Bai Yunfei began to feel a tremendous amount of anger rise from his stomach to his head, “Bastard, just what sh*t are you up to now with my face?!”

Jing Mingfeng had been taken back as well when he turned the corner and ran into Bai Yunfei, but he didn’t slow down in the slightest and continued to run like the wind. Seeing Bai Yunfei glare at him, Jing Mingfeng gave a wave of his wand as he ran, “Damn! How’d you appear here!? But now’s not the time to chat and talk about the past, running is more important. I’m off then!”

“Chat my ass! I’ll settle our debts this time. I’ll... I’ll hang your liver to the wall! Just who have you provoked this time!?”

Bai Yunfei hadn’t even finished saying ‘debt’ before his words became furious howls. Determinedly turning around, he began to chase after Jing Mingfeng in a mad dash.

In that interaction, the remaining soul cultivators had already turned around the corners as well. In their hands were all sorts of flashing weapons that radiated with killing intent. When they turned the corner and saw Bai Yunfei, they dashed toward him without another word.

The only thing that could be seen in their eyes was the unhidden urge to commit murder!!

Chapter 102: Kill Them Straight Away

“He has an accomplice! Be on the lookout for more, don’t let any of them get away!”

Leading the chasing group were a low-grade and mid-stage Soul Sprite. Behind them were several Soul Warriors and Soul Personages that totaled up to around twenty people. Their auras could cover the entire sky and alert even Bai Yunfei in front of them.

This was not indignation, but murderous intent!

Bai Yunfei swiped at Jing Mingfeng who was passing by his side. With a snarl, he shouted, “Bastard! What did you do!?”

Jing Mingfeng’s speed slightly slowed from this motion. Even Bai Yunfei’s speed faltered a bit, but Jing Mingfeng shook off the hand that was at his collar with some force. He tried to explain himself as if he was innocent of his crimes, “I don’t know either, okay? I had only wanted to hang around a mansion to see here and there, but I didn’t think that house would have so many experts in it! As soon as they saw me, they began to chase me down, I’d have been beaten to death if I stayed there! In fact, I nearly found myself dying a couple of times!”

As he spoke, Jing Mingfeng suddenly grimaced in pain and clutched at his left shoulder with his right hand. It was then that Bai Yunfei realized that Jing Mingfeng’s left shoulder had been lanced through with a weapon, leaving behind a serious looking wound. Despite the blood being stanchered, half of his clothes had already been stained through and through from the blood that he had shed earlier.

“Did you really not do anything?” Bai Yunfei grabbed his right shoulder and began to use his Wave Treading Steps to further increase their speed.

A glint of appreciation flashed through Jing Mingfeng's eyes as he nodded his head, "I really don't know. I didn't even have time to do anything. If anything, when the people inside saw me, I only saw two of them discussing something. They were extremely strong, and I was safe for a moment. In the next moment, a large group of people suddenly started to chase me..."

Bai Yunfei was furious with Jing Mingfeng in his heart, but he didn't doubt the claims he was making. Turning back to look at the group of people chasing him, there was a sullen look in his eyes. He had been recognized as an accomplice of Jing Mingfeng. If the two of them were to be overtaken, then he wouldn't even have time to explain himself with the way things were right now. He'd be beaten and killed first.

"Nothing good has ever happened since I bumped into you!!" Bai Yunfei glared at Jing Mingfeng. Bai Yunfei wanted nothing more than to punch his look alike in the face, but when he saw the helpless and regretful expression on Jing Mingfeng's face, he let out a sigh. "We'll settle our debts later! For now, we'll have to shake off those guys behind us!"

"Your movement based soul skill is fast enough, you go first. Since their target is me, I'll pull them away and escape by myself..." Jing Mingfeng looked at the group behind them and then turned back to Bai Yunfei.

"Don't even try to think yourself to be so sickeningly righteous! Do you really think that they'll let me go!?" Bai Yunfei snorted. Then with a softer voice, "I still want you to explain to that young miss and aunty the troubles you gave me in any case! Don't you know I was labeled a pervert because of you!?"

"Er..." Jing Mingfeng looked a little embarrassed by that, but his gratitude for Bai Yunfei had increased nonetheless.

"Talk less bullshit and run faster. We'll never throw them off this way!" Bai Yunfei urged.

Grudgingly, Jing Mingfeng said, “I’m hurt, so I can’t run as fast. For the sake of shaking them off earlier, I’ve already used up the most of what my elemental wind has to offer...”

“Tsk!” There was a hint of anxiety in Bai Yunfei’s mind. If this continued, even if they were to reach the city gates, they still wouldn’t be able to shake off the people chasing them. If he were to abandon Jing Mingfeng and run away, then he would for sure be able to escape them. However, this very thought had been immediately overruled in his head. If he were to do this, then he would be no better than someone who would sacrifice everyone but himself or herself to save their own hide. Indeed, he wouldn’t do such a thing. Even more importantly, the situation had not yet reached a bleak impasse despite his anxiety.

His eyes began to repeatedly flash. As soon as they reached the entrance to a street, Bai Yunfei had already made a decision. With a shake of his right hand, two rings appeared in them. Thrusting them over to Jing Mingfeng, he commanded, “Wear it!”

“Huh?” Jing Mingfeng had been completely focused on the terrain in front of him without consideration of anything else. So when Bai Yunfei took the rings all of a sudden, he had been taken back. Staring strangely at Bai Yunfei, he asked, “What did you say?”

“Stop your bullshit and wear these rings! One ring per hand!”

Seeing the serious face of Bai Yunfei, Jing Mingfeng’s eyebrows pinched together as if he was thinking about something. Without any more words, he took the two ring and quickly put them on his forefingers.

The moment he put on the rings, Jing Mingfeng’s eyelids flew up in surprise. Flabbergasted, he could sense a strange sensation fill his body and forcibly increase his speed by a fraction!

“Wear these two as well!”

This time Jing Mingfeng did not hesitate to take the two bracelets handed to him by Bai Yunfei and quickly put them on.

His speed increased again!

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“Wha... how could they still accelerate in speed!” The mid-stage Soul Sprite couldn’t help but cry out when he saw the two increase in speed once more.

After several more minutes of chasing them, the two males grew farther and farther away from them. The chasers revealed looks of worry as they saw their targets start to escape. With a look to the others, one of the chasers began to use his soulforce to try and overtake them.

“There’s no need to chase them anymore...”

Just then, a faint voice could be heard from the air behind them. Startled, the men came to a stop. The others in the group heard the voice as well, causing them to grind to a stop and look up behind them.

Standing several meters in the air, one figure in black and another in violet came walking across the sky.

The person on the left was a middle-aged man dressed in violet. His hair was slightly white, and a two-inch scar could be seen on the left side of his face. Expressionless and emotionless, this was the man that had just spoken. Each step he took through the empty air possessed a tint of purple light that formed underneath his feet as if forming a platform for him to walk on.

The other man was dressed completely in black, and his face was rather hard to make out. Similar to the first man, there was a faint glow of golden light under his feet that allowed him to traverse the sky.

Slowing down, the two figures traversed another hundred meters before coming to a stop above the group of chasers.

“Milord...” The leader reverently called out.

The middle-aged man nodded in acknowledgement. “Take your men and go back. Take heed to make sure that no other soul cultivator was alerted.”

“Yes!” The group did not hesitate to respond. Without any further words, they all began to leave the area with speed.

“What do you think? Did that one hear what we were talking about?” No longer caring for the group beneath them, the man in black and the man in violet began to walk toward Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng, who were still running away.

“It matters not if they heard it or not. All that needs to be done is to kill.” The figure in black spoke; there was a distinctively young-sounding voice to this one.

“Yes. The only thing that remains to be seen is if they have any more colleagues. Let us follow them for now. If there are no more, then kill them straight away.”

Chapter 103: Chased by a Soul Exalt!

Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng both ran with reckless abandonment for a thousand meters before they could sense the murderous aura behind them disappear. Blankly, the two of them looked at each other first before turning their heads back to check.

The streets behind them were completely clear of people without a trace of their pursuers to be seen.

“Did we lose them?” Jing Mingfeng asked in doubt.

Bai Yunfei was suspicious as well. Before he could speak, his eyes suddenly widened in surprise as he looked straight up into the air a hundred meters behind them.

At the same time, Jing Mingfeng had realized the sight a hundred meters behind them as well. Standing a dozen meters in the sky were two figures that were leisurely walking toward them.

“Skywalking, they’re Soul Exalts!!” Jing Mingfeng’s face immediately grew deathly pale as he shrieked. He nearly tripped as a result. “This aura... they’re the two that were discussing something in that room! They were actually Soul Exalts!”

Bai Yunfei’s was startled as well. Skywalking was a result of becoming incomparably adept at harnessing the elemental force. One would then be able to walk upon the elements condensed into a platform. To be able to pull off such a technique would mean one had to be a Soul Exalt at the very least.

“They’re individuals just as strong as brother Hong Yin!” Bai Yunfei’s face hardened even more with his eyes flashing with light. “They’re clearly chasing to kill us, but seeing how they’re walking so slowly, that must mean... they’re trying to see if we have anymore ‘accomplices’. If they appear, then they would just kill us all together.”

“Jing Mingfeng.” Bai Yunfei turned to look at the fork in the road

and whispered, “We’ll split up. Whether we can run away or not, well, you’d better start praying for more luck...”

Jing Mingfeng blankly stared for a moment before realization hit him back to awareness. With the four items given to him by Bai Yunfei, his speed had improved by a decent amount. With these two Soul Exalts following them, they would die without a doubt if they tried to run together. However, if they split up, then the Soul Exalts would have to split up as well. By then, he could use his secret techniques to try and escape with his life...

In this moment of understanding, Jing Mingfeng expressed his resolve. With a nod of his head, he replied, “Okay, it’s every man for himself! Bai Yunfei, I really apologize for involving you in this! This wasn’t my intent at all. Should we get out of this, then know that you will be a friend to me!”

“Go f*ck yourself! If I could choose, I’d rather never be able to see you again instead!” Bai Yunfei rolled his eyes before speaking irately, “Save those words for later then. Don’t even try to trick me again you shameless framer! I’ll make sure to beat some sense into you later!”

“Haha, then we’ll talk later!”

After a speedy exchange between the two, they gave a slight nod as they approached the fork in the road. With a stamp of their feet, the two split the paths as quick as possible.

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“Eh? They’ve split up? Did they think that they’d be able to escape like this?” The violet-robed man grimly laughed.

“This is nothing more than the final struggle of a rat. We’ll go after one person each. If they don’t have any accomplices help them, just kill them.” The black-robed figure was still talking in a calm voice as if he was talking about killing a mere rat instead of a human.

Having said that, the two figures split off left and right as well. The middle-aged man chased down Jing Mingfeng while the black-robed youth chased after Bai Yunfei.

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Bai Yunfei had already pulled out several speed-enhancing accessories to wear on his person. With the Wave Treading Steps, he was already running at such a fast speed that mirror images were left behind in his desperate escape.

His speed became so fast that even his chaser was startled for a moment. With a sneer, the black-robed man sped up his footsteps so that he was constantly within a few hundred meters of Bai Yunfei.

“Damn, damn, damn it all!!” Bai Yunfei didn’t even want to look back. He knew that the man chasing him was doing so with ease. Biting his lips, Bai Yunfei continued to circulate his soulforce into his feet at a steady rate so that they exploded with power and gave his speed another boost. At this moment, he could see that the city gates were less than a hundred meters away.

Bai Yunfei’s eyes flashed with inspiration. Increasing his speed by another spurt, his right hand shook before a ear-piercing sound could be heard. With a “thuck!” sound, a dagger had lodged itself halfway up the wall, leaving behind only the hilt of the weapon sticking out.

At the same time the dagger was inserted into the wall, Bai Yunfei leaped off the ground several meters forward into the sky. Then, borrowing the hilt of the dagger to increase his momentum, he flew over the wall without stopping, leaping out of the city.

With a sneer, the black-robed figure began to climb up an imaginary set of stairs without concern. In an instant, he had escalated the wall just in time to see Bai Yunfei slip into the stone forest in front of him.

The black-robed figure stood on top of the wall for a moment as he scanned the area in front of him. He had finally lost his patience. Nobody else appeared to save him so he was prepared to kill this rat to save time.

The golden light underneath his feet brightened for a moment as he deactivated his skywalking technique. With a gentle leap, he stepped onto a dozen meter tall stone boulder and gave two mighty stomps!

“Bang!” A two meter crater could be seen underneath his feet in the boulder before it collapsed. Before it fell apart, his body had been sent jetting toward Bai Yunfei at a speed that was several times faster than Bai Yunfei!

In a few seconds, he had already cut down the gap between them so he was barely two hundred meters away from Bai Yunfei!

Just at that moment, Bai Yunfei suddenly whirled around from his attempt to flee. At the same time he whirled around, four chilling rays of light could be seen shooting toward the black-robed man!

“Hmph!” The man sneered. Without moving to dodge, he waved his right hand so that a yellow halo encircled his hand. Four crisp echoes could be heard soon after. The daggers that Bai Yunfei had thrown with all his might had immediately been reduced to scrap!

Without decreasing in speed, the man drew even closer to Bai Yunfei with his right hand ready to strike Bai Yunfei down.

“Clang!”

Following the sound of metal hitting metal, the man’s fist impacted against Bai Yunfei’s right shoulder. Despite the Flameblade Bracer’s defensive ability, Bai Yunfei could almost sense it shattering apart from the monstrous blow as he was knocked to the ground.

The man’s speed had paused for a moment as well. However,

with a push of his right leg, he continued his chase and lashed out with another right fist!

Bai Yunfei's pupils dilated in fear as he clenched his right fist so tightly that his veins began to bulge out for a single punch.

Ninefold Fist Force!

“Bang!”

Bai Yunfei was sent flying away with bewilderment. He felt as if the bones in his right fist had been reduced to dust. A series of sharp blades of elemental energy seemed to begin to cut away at his innards before a burst of elemental fire from the Flameblade Bracer prevented them from growing any more.

His opponent had paused after that second impact with a slight utterance of a gasp. Bai Yunfei's second strike to defend himself seemed to surprise him.

Gravely, Bai Yunfei shook his right arm to regain sense in it. Steadying his body with his mind thinking at tremendous speeds, Bai Yunfei's eyes scanned the area only to see the black-robed figure. Sizing him up, he immediately turned around without the intent of stopping and flew past a huge rock to flee.

The same moment Bai Yunfei started moving, the black-robed man moved as well with a speed that was even faster! As Bai Yunfei took two steps past around the rock, the other man had already reached the very same boulder.

In this split-second, Bai Yunfei took one more step before pivoting around on his right leg. Following up, the Fire-tipped Spear appeared in his right hand and stabbed out at the boulder!

Ninefold Thrust!

“Krhs.” A nearly undetectable sound could be heard as the Fire-tipped Spear inserted itself into the giant boulder. With a gleam in Bai Yunfei's eye, he rotated the spear.

“Bang!!”

Following a heaven-shaking explosion, the giant boulder began to violently crack right underneath the startled eyes of the black-robed figure. A crimson light spilled out as several fragments of the flaming boulder began to shoot in every direction — primarily in his direction however!

This was the biggest change in momentum the man had made yet. Taking a step back to avoid the boulder fragments, he brought up both hands and drew an empty circle in the air around him. A golden light exploded from his palms and immediately materialized a disk in front of him.

“Bang bang bang!!” A series of concentrated hits could be heard as the flying fragments struck the golden barrier. Unable to penetrate through, the fragments crumbled one after another in front of the black-robed man.

However, Bai Yunfei’s attack had not yet ended!

Completely ignoring the spasms of pain brought forth from the backlash of the Ninefold Thrust down his right arm, Bai Yunfei’s eyes glistened with a berserk light. Leaping straight up, his spear had been put away and his right fist rose up into the air. A red light circled around the fist as a rich elemental fire began to show itself.

“Bang!” A puff of fire immediately flew out from Bai Yunfei’s right shoulder sleeve before revealing the crimson Flameblade Bracer shining underneath. A single two meter long blade made of fire could be seen materializing on the back side of his shoulder, forcibly lifting the temperature of the surrounding area up several degrees.

Flamed Winged Blade!

This was the +12 additional effect of the Flameblade Bracer and it would be the very first time Bai Yunfei would use it on an enemy. By using all of his soulforce at once, it would become his strongest

attack!

With hardened eyes, Bai Yunfei swung his right arm violently. The flame blade left behind a scorching path as it flew toward the man who was currently blocking himself from the boulder fragments!

The black-robed man's body gave a violent tremble at the sight. Although his face could not be seen clearly, there was still a noticeable amount of shock. No longer caring for the fragments that were shooting at him, he observed the incoming blade of fire. With a final sweep of his right arm to block the boulders, his entire body lit up with a golden light before it flew out from his body with a sudden spurt of speed. Even the boulders coming at him were delayed for a single moment after coming in contact with it.

"Boom!!!!"

The flame blade made contact with the golden light before becoming overwhelmed by it. A layer of fire covered the entire area before dispersing into a wave of flames that burned the surrounding grass to ashes. With the fiery-red and the golden-yellow colors mixing, it became rather hard to see anything clearly within a ten meter radius of the impact.

To describe everything was to complicate the matter. From the time it took Bai Yunfei to whirl around with his spear, explode with fire, leap into the air, summon the winged blade, impact it against the enemy, and cover the entire area with the aftermath had only taken less than ten seconds!

Suddenly, a figure came retreating back from the light. The movements of the figure were unsteady and the left arm of the owner clutched at the right arm, which was shaking nonstop. Retreating ten meters away, it was only when his back came to a rest next to a wall that the figure stopped moving. With a grim expression, the figure looked at the area where the fire and golden light was only starting to dissipate.

The figure was Bai Yunfei!!

Chapter 104: Jiang Fan of the Crafting School!

Fixedly staring at the black-robed figure, Bai Yunfei began to try to recover all of the soulforce he had used up.

“This has to be my last resort, how will this turn out...”

Just as Bai Yunfei was thinking to himself, an unbelievably strong amount of soulforce began to glow from the heart of the explosion. The golden light began to intensify. It washed over the flying rocks and started to spiral around the area, forming a golden tornado that spun.

Spinning faster and faster, the tornado continued to drag the wisps of fire and stone to its center. Soon it started to slow. Not even a minute later, the tornado had gone from a circumference of over a dozen meters to two or three meters. Now, the black-robed man could be seen standing in it.

Lifting his right hand in front of his body, the black-robed man gave it a shake to dissipate the golden light. As it dissipated, it transform into a golden ball that revolved around him.

Like before, the black-robed man could be seen standing straight and tall. However, the arm he lifted before, his right arm, had its sleeve burned off. On his skin underneath, an inch wide burn could be seen. The wound had been rather heavy, and even with the golden light around his arm, a single bright-red glow leaked from it.

His black robes remained, but the black hood that had covered his head was partially gone. His silver hair could be seen underneath along with a golden mask on his face.

Several strands of bloody stripes could be seen on the golden mask as if they were malevolent scars on a face. It gave it a rather demonic look. Even more demonic was the fact that behind the

eyeholes the right eye was normal, but the other eye had a silver-colored pupil. What was more bizarre than that was the fact that it was a vertical pupil commonly seen in beasts!

Inspecting the wounds on his right arm, the man's eyes couldn't hide his shock and his incomparable fury. As a Soul Exalt, he had been injured by a Soul Sprite of the younger generation!!

Suddenly bringing up his head with glinting eyes, he took a single step forward with his feet. Then, with a bright trail of golden light in the shape of a sharp blade, the man took off with an ear-whistling sound toward Bai Yunfei!

The man suddenly leaped over Bai Yunfei jumping several meters into the air as he headed toward him. The man whirled around in mid-air. Forming a knife hand with his left hand, the man began to concentrate a halo of golden light before ultimately sending a single slash of light at Bai Yunfei!

From the looks of things, the man looked as if he had the same idea as Bai Yunfei. 'An eye for an eye', but Bai Yunfei would die!

The moment when Bai Yunfei saw the man make a move, his eyes had narrowed in concentration. As he was preparing himself to dodge, his opponent managed to traverse several dozen meters to get to him. The next leap had been many times faster than his previous speeds!

Overwhelmed with shock, Bai Yunfei dodged with his life on the line. Using some of his restored soulforce for the Wave Treading Steps, he manage to stumble half a meter away.

"Swish!"

A single second later, the earth began to shake. The giant boulder Bai Yunfei had been leaning against immediately split into two perfect halves!

When the black-robed man landed back on the ground, he brought his left arm down and his right arm back up to unleash yet

another ‘blade’ of light!

Unable to dodge, Bai Yunfei clenched his teeth and brought his bracer up to protect himself from the blade.

“Clang!!”

Another clash could be heard along with a fiery spark as Bai Yunfei’s body was thrown back. While he remained unharmed, there was a single white slash on his bracer. Though the bracer was already restoring itself back to its original state.

A flash of surprise came across the man’s eyes, but he let out a sneer without stopping. He charged straight at Bai Yunfei.

Once again greeted with the golden ‘palm blade’, Bai Yunfei quickly retreated while bringing his right arm up to defend himself again.

Just as the left arm of the black-robed man came down, a gleam appeared in the man’s eyes! Suddenly, he diverted the angle of his palm so that the blade of light shot past Bai Yunfei’s bracer and straight into his chest!

“Bang!!”

Bai Yunfei’s body was like an artillery shell as he shot back with a resounding impact sound. Breaking through a meter thick boulder, Bai Yunfei continued for another ten meters before finally stopping by tumbling on the ground.

Bai Yunfei knelt on the ground with a dark expression as he belched out a mouthful of blood. There was despair in his eyes at first before he refocused himself. With a wave of his right arm, the Glacial Pricker appeared in it. He glared at the black-robed man in preparation to attack.

Seeing the heavily injured Bai Yunfei, the black-robed man let out a satisfied chuckle. The killing intent in his eyes grew even richer. His right arm had completely healed by now. Lifting up his leg, he prepared to move out to attack again.

The moment after he brought his leg up, his eyes suddenly dilated before he leaped back without hesitation.

Practically milliseconds after he had retreated, a crimson-red light cut the area where he had been standing. Even after being dodged, the crimson light changed directions to once more shoot straight at the black-robed man!

Gaining a chilly frost to his eyes, the black-robed man clenched his fist and raised it. The golden light around him began to condensate and form a meter long broadsword that slashed down at the red gleam.

“Clang!” The red gleam came to a sudden stop, revealing a crimson sword about a meter long!

The black-robed man’s right hand came flying up while his entire body was flung back. The crimson sword rotated several times in the air before ultimately being caught by a white figure.

His white robes accentuated his tall but relaxed posture; this newcomer looked no older than thirty years old. His face was steady, his eyebrows thick, and even the hair on his temples was rather sharp looking. Step by step, the man walked on the sky itself with a red light glowing underneath his feet. It was the eldest son of the family that had been watching Bai Yunfei from the teahouse, Jiang Fan!

Jiang Fan came to a stop on top of a ten meter tall boulder, creating a triangular shape between the black-robed man and Bai Yunfei. Holding onto the crimson-red sword in his hand, he stared suspiciously at the man with cold eyes for a moment before asking, “And who might this sire be? Is a grand Soul Exalt really bullying a junior Soul Sprite from my Crafting School?”

Flabbergasted, the black-robe man stared at Bai Yunfei who was several dozens meters away with flickering eyes.

Bai Yunfei’s eyes twinkled as well with a pensive gleam to them.

Having Jiang Fan obstruct the other man had given him some breathing room for a moment. Whatever the identity of this individual or why this man was helping him confused Bai Yunfei. This confusion remained until he heard himself being referred to as a ‘junior of the Crafting School’.

“He’s from the Crafting School! But why did he say I’m a junior there? Could it be because... of my soulbound armament?” Bai Yunfei spared a glance at his Flameblade Bracer with a guess. Inwardly rejoicing to himself, Bai Yunfei stood back up with the Glacial Pricker clenched tightly in his hands. Standing still with rapt attention, Bai Yunfei began to recover his soulforce to recuperate his wounds.

“The Red Lotus Blood Sword, Crafting School, you’re Jiang Fan!” After a moment’s silence, the man harshly spoke.

Jiang Fan laughed, “So you’ve heard of me? What should I call you then? I can tell that you’re similar to my age based off of your voice. But with your strength... might I ask which sect or family you’re a part of?”

The man did not respond, prompting Jiang Fan to respond, “If you’re not willing to speak, then forget it. Allow me to ask, just what did my junior do to offend you to the point of being exterminated without mercy?”

The man’s eyes grew even colder as he snorted, “I wish to kill him, that’s all. Do I really need to give you my reasoning!?”

“Oh?” Jiang Fan’s eyebrows arched up. “From what you’re saying, do you mean to tell me that you don’t see my Crafting School as a threat?”

Unflinchingly, the man continued to speak with the same frosty tone, “Crafting School? Pah, how intimidating! Do you really think I’d be scared shitless by you! You and I are of the same strength; if I wished to kill him, do you think you could protect him and yourself at the same time?”

Jiang Fan's smile receded away from his face to reveal a look of disdain. With a slight growl, he spoke, "Did you think I wouldn't be able to? Then why are you talking so much? You've already lost plenty of soulforce fighting my junior earlier. So, instead of trying to find a chance to get past me, you're just biding your time to recover your strength. Isn't that right?"

"He's figured it out!" The man thought to himself, but concentrating on his icy nerves, he replied, "Then I'll kill him for you to see!!"

As soon as he finished speaking, a tremendous amount of force brought him flying toward Bai Yunfei!

However, Jiang Fan had prepared for this long ago. With a swing of his right arm, the long sword flew out. Simultaneously taking off, Jiang Fan charged toward the median point where Bai Yunfei and the black-robed man would meet.

Halfway to his destination, the man had tilted to the side to dodge the long sword that came up to block him. The sword rotated around before returning to Jiang Fan's hand. The sword then came swinging down to strike the man down.

The man's pupil's vaguely contracted as he shook his right arm. A bright golden dagger appeared in his hand, allowing him to block the incoming sword.

Borrowing the impact force to whirl around, Jiang Fan moved in front of Bai Yunfei. Glancing at him, Jiang Fan commanded, "You leave first!"

He was afraid that Bai Yunfei would be caught up in the storm of the battle due to the determined intent of the enemy. It was hard for him to protect the two of them. Therefore, it would be easier to make it so he would only need to protect himself.

Bai Yunfei didn't even need to be told to retreat since he was already doing so the moment Jiang Fan and the other man made

their moves. When he heard Jiang Fan's order, Bai Yunfei's legs moved a fraction of a second faster and he quickly traversed a hundred meters.

The same time Jiang Fan had cried out, the other man's legs gained a halo of golden light underneath it. Leaping off the ground to fly several meters into the air, the man looked ominously at the retreating figure of Bai Yunfei. The dagger in his right hand gleamed with a bright light before suddenly flying with a golden crescent arc at Bai Yunfei.

“Bang!!”

Bai Yunfei's speed increased abruptly at that moment, resulting in the light missing his back. It struck a nearby pillar. With a shattering explosion, the stone pillar split in two.

Just as the man was about to release a second arc of light, his eyes suddenly widened in realization. He threw himself to his right. Just as he dodged, a crimson red light streaked past him and collided with the golden light.

By this point, Jiang Fan had already move ten meters into the air along with the man. His eyes coldly stared the man down while the crimson-red sword in his hand moved with a trail of after-images behind it. A ball of fire could be seen gathering in the air around him before dancing around the sword itself. It was as if it was being attracted by some sort of strange pull. As the fire gathered, it began to swirl around the area.

In a split second, the flames split off to materialize into seven lotus flowers around Jiang Fan. Rotating around his body, they continued to compress themselves.

“Red Lotus!”

Chapter 105: Once Again....

“Red Lotus!”

Jiang Fan’s eyes intensified in coldness as he glared at the black-robed man. Pointing his crimson-red sword at the man, the surrounding seven lotuses seemed to gain a life of their own. Billowing with a trail of flames, they flew to surround the man and sealed off any of his potential paths.

The man shot a murderous glance at Bai Yunfei who was almost completely out of sight already. The golden light from his dagger extended another third of a meter from the tip and shot out across the sky once more.

Snorting, Jiang Fan brandished his sword so that one of the lotuses on the left side flew up to strike against the golden gleam of light.

“Bang!!”

Exploding upon impact, a tremendous amount of backlash bursted from the collision and washed over the entire place. Unable to bear the brunt of the force, the stones underneath began to crumble and disintegrate while the golden light and the red lotus disappeared.

The moment after the impact, a gleam of golden light flashed underneath the black-robed man’s feet as he dashed out from the gap left when one of the fire lotuses flew away. It appeared as if he wanted to escape from this imprisonment and focus on chasing Bai Yunfei instead of focusing on Jiang Fan.

But Jiang Fan smiled coldly once more as if he had predicted this would happen. Moving his sword in a circular motion, he commanded the remaining six scorching lotuses to strike into the man.

The speed of the six lotuses was faster than before—at least two

times faster than they were previously! In a split second, the man's irises had contracted in apparent surprise. This had been outside of his expectations, causing him to freeze where he was and hurriedly bring out his entire strength without hesitation. With an amount of dazzling light that was even brighter than when Bai Yunfei used his Winged Flame Blades on him earlier. Even the dagger in his hand began to vibrate intensely enough for there to be a resonating sound from the blade.

Seeing the incoming lotuses come at him, the black-robed man tilted his dagger so that a resonating 'xiinggg' could be heard. A dazzling amount of golden light shot out and began to compress against the fire lotuses with its light.

Without stopping, the man brought his right hand up and down another five times so that five more blades of light flew out behind him to strike the remaining five lotuses down.

Then, the golden light began to gather around him abruptly in a cocoon-like state. Condensing in a manner that obscured the human figure, the black-robed man now looked as if he was in some sort of golden cocoon that floated in midair.

Despite the complexity of explaining these actions, the time between them all had only taken an instant. After the six blades were sent out, he had the golden light around him contract around himself to protect him from the resulting impact

"Bang!!!"

The explosions had happened almost simultaneously, resulting in a single loud boom. The sound had been so loud that it rocked even the earth beneath; it was possible even that the people from Stonegroove City would have heard it.

After the explosions, the six lotuses had transformed into a wave of elemental fire filled with power still. With the black-robed man at the center, the surrounding ten meters was transformed into a sea of flames that concealed the golden cocoon.

An unbelievable amount of searing hot flames spread throughout the area, crumbling the stone pillars in the area. Many of them began to disintegrate with time, and eventually they became nothing but fine dust after the golden light and elemental fire mixed with it!!

A thousand meters away, Bai Yunfei who had been desperately running away had nearly struck against a giant boulder after hearing the terrifying explosion. Looking up, he could only see a gigantic wave of fire flow from the battlegrounds. Even a thousand meters away, he could practically feel the scorching heat from the elemental fire.

“This is...a battle between Soul Exalts!!” Bai Yunfei eyes reflected the burning hot flames for a moment before quickly becoming normal once more. But without stopping to even press down on his wounds, Bai Yunfei continued to run forward as fast as he could.

Standing on top of a stone pillar, Jiang Fan observed the sea of flames with a serene eye. But the sword in his hand hadn’t relaxed an inch. He knew that that one strike from the other man had been filled with power and was not a person to be trifled with. There would be no relaxing of his guard for now.

The entire area had been extremely quiet. It could even be said to be deathly quiet. Even the surrounding crickets and cicadas couldn’t be heard at all. Only the crackling sounds of the sea of flames could be heard.

After around ten minutes, the flames had finally begun to die down when all of a sudden, a globe of dazzling gold light suddenly soared through the air. Bisecting the remaining flames in two, the black-robed man came flying out from the middle of it.

Jiang Fan’s eyebrows flew up on his face in apparent shock. He knew that the enemy wouldn’t be too heavily damaged, but it seemed as if the man was completely unharmed. Even though he couldn’t see the face under the mask, the gloomy light in the man’s

eyes and the untouched clothes of the man had hinted that despite the large amount of soulforce that was used, the man was unharmed.

The man walked out from the flames and stood several dozen meters away from Jiang Fan with a death glare. Not speaking a word, the man didn't seem to have any notions on chasing after Bai Yunfei.

Using his soulsense to look for Bai Yunfei, Jiang Fan gave a smirk after realizing that Bai Yunfei was gone by now. Clasping his hands together, he spoke, "It seems that you haven't any idea on fighting anymore, so let's leave things here as it is. If there's a chance in the future, please teach me well!"

Clenching the fist with a sword in his hand tightly, the man's eyes could barely suppress the murderous rage within them. He had wanted nothing more than to fight Jiang Fan, but he knew that this was neither the time or place suitable for a giant battle now. His opponent was someone from the Crafting School; in the case that they discovered who he was, then it would bring countless of misfortune that would affect the plans of his school.

Staring hard at Jiang Fan for a minute, the man in black finally let out a final sneer before leaping off his pillar. Several leaps later, he disappeared into the night sky in the exact opposite direction of where Bai Yunfei had run off to.

Jiang Fan looked off at the disappearing figure for several seconds before letting out a gentle sigh. Collecting his sword, he whirled around to the other side. Sensing nothing there, his eyebrows furrowed together before finally shaking his head helplessly.

"This kid. He really did run off....is he afraid I'll hurt him or something?" Jiang Fan muttered. "Maybe he's never seen me before and doesn't know who I am....Forget it, as long as he escaped, everything is good. The more experience he gets to hone

himself, the better. If he's out on a journey away from the school, it'd be good for him to experience the bitterness to life."

Then glancing at the direction where the black-robed man disappeared off into, his eyes reflected a curious glint. "Just who was that person....he deliberately fought in a way that didn't make use of any particular soul skill or fighting style. Was he afraid of revealing who he was? Just what was he up to if he was chasing down a junior to such an extent..."

With a mind filled with doubt, Jiang Fan could only return back to the city.

.....

Bai Yunfei had only felt his mind growing fuzzy as he tried his best to support himself as he ran as fast as possible into the forest. The leaves crackled underneath his feet after running for an unknown amount of time. Without stopping at all, Bai Yunfei only knew that the farther away he ran, the less of a chance he would be chased....

After running for nearly an hour, Bai Yunfei finally came to a stop, his spirit weary and his strength exhausted. Climbing on top of a tree, he hid himself within the tree branches and sat on top of a thick branch to regain his breath.

Not even several gasps later, his face suddenly grew red. With a hand flying to his chest, Bai Yunfei began to look pained.

"Pfft!!"

A single mouthful of blood splattered the tree leaves, dying the verdant leaves a crimson hue. Pained, Bai Yunfei let out several more coughs before his condition finally took a turn for the better.

Leaning against the tree with his back, Bai Yunfei closed his eyes and began to slow down his breathing. Several minutes later, he entered a complete meditational state. A weak red glow encircled his body, gradually turning his face a healthier shade of color

before finally stabilizing.

.....

On the second day when the sun was hanging in the middle of the sky almost, Bai Yunfei slowly opened his eyes.

“Phew....” Taking in a deep breath of air, Bai Yunfei’s eyes had a happy look to them.

“Its lucky that I’m not too heavily injured. At most, it should take two days to heal completely.” Bai Yunfei rubbed at his chest, “Thank the heavens for my Goldsilk Soul Armor. Otherwise, my entire rib cage would be dust by now.”

“I was saved by someone yet again....” Bai Yunfei thought to himself with an unwilling expression. “If not for the fact that Jiang Fan mistook me to be someone from the Crafting School, I would have most likely been killed by the man in black. Damn it all, why is it that I always have to rely on someone else to save my own life?! Luck can’t always be by my side, it only just needs one more time where it is not here for me to lose my own life....”

“Power. I need power!!” Bai Yunfei clenched both fists tightly as desire flooded his eyes. “If I become a Soul Exalt, or even stronger than one....then I don’t need to rely on the favors of others. I could just beat or even kill the ones who are trying to kill me! Power, I just need power....”

Several minutes later, Bai Yunfei regained his tranquil expression once more.

“Ah, I wonder where Jing Mingfeng is....” Bai Yunfei suddenly thought back to Jing Mingfeng who had been chased by a Soul Exalt as well. Unable to stop himself from worrying, Bai Yunfei immediately went rigid and had a grimace on his face as he mocked himself, “For f*ck sakes, it was because of him that this happened to me. Why am I worrying about him? If he wasn’t so bored to use me for such a thing, I wouldn’t have been called a pervert or be

chased down to be killed and lose my life!"

"It's good that I'm lucky....that bastard Jing Mingfeng. If I see him again, I'll beat the crap out of him until he can't even live a normal life!!" Bai Yunfei thought hatefully, but it had not been too spiteful, causing him to feel somewhat odd. For such a person that gave him so much trouble and danger, Bai Yunfei was still feeling generous towards him; was he being masochistic? Bai Yunfei silently cursed at himself—it was only because he had already escaped from danger without much harm that he could laugh and amuse himself like so.

But he had already determined that should this happen again, he would definitely take out a sizeable compensation from Jing Mingfeng....

Chapter 106: Bird Soulbeast?

Roughly fifty kilometers in a forest to the north of Stonegroove City at night.

Bai Yunfei continued to pry apart the human-sized reeds obstructing his vision as he traveled forward. At the same time, he continued to look up at the sea of trees around him. Trekking over the dried leaves for several hundred meters, he finally decided upon a tall tree to climb up and looked around.

A moment later, his face stared gloomily at the setting sun far away. “F*ck. Even I don’t know where I am, how is the enemy supposed to find me here then??”

“Forget it, isn’t this how it’s always been? As long as I know the general direction, I should be fine. If the sun is setting down in that direction, then the north should be that direction as well....” Bai Yunfei turned towards the north while deep in thought, “I bet that Jiang Fan has already completely stopped that man from killing me so it should be safe. But I can’t return to Stonegroove City either. I have to continue onwards to the north....”

“What a shame! I was only in Stonegroove City for two days; there was so many things I haven’t seen yet!” Bai Yunfei lamented as he prepared to jump down from the tree to continue his travels.

“Eh?” Just at that moment, Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows rose up as he noticed something above his head.

“Whoosh!!”

A minute sound of moving wind could be heard as it drew close to him. A single azure shadow flitted over Bai Yunfei’s head, but not slow enough for him to see what it was. After the shadow flew past, it became a small dot that disappeared from sight shortly afterwards.

“That’s a....bird?? But isn’t it flying a little too fast?” Bai Yunfei

stared in disbelief. Then, realizing something with a start, he spoke, “But this feeling, it’s a little familiar...oh! It’s almost the exact same as Xiao Tang!”

“A soulbeast!!” Bai Yunfei cried out with even more shock. “It’s a little weaker than Xiao Tang, but its speed definitely makes it stand out from the rest!”

Bai Yunfei had been stupefied as he looked around himself. “This forest has soulbeasts too? Isn’t that strange though? I never came across any before...”

“A bird huh....definitely a bird....if I had a bird soulbeast as a partner, then life wouldn’t be too bad. But it’s already gone so fast that it’s gone....” Bai Yunfei shook his head. But a second later, Bai Yunfei suddenly felt something wet from on top of his head, “Eh? What’s that on my head?”

When he brought a hand over to the top of his head, he could only feel something wet and sticky with his fingers.

“I can’t believe this, why do I have such bad luck?” Thinking the bird had actually crapped on him during its speedy flight, Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but let loose a curse as he brought up his finger to stare at it.

“Blood?” But unexpectedly, there was a splotch of blood on his finger.

“Then does that mean....it’s injured?” Bai Yunfei looked off into the direction the bird had flown off to in surprise. “It can still fly so fast while injured?! And does this mean it’s running for its life right now? Injured and yet still doing its best to escape....”

Having reached that line of thought, Bai Yunfei suddenly began to feel a little mournful for the bird. It was as if they were connected by the same string of fate that Bai Yunfei began to sympathize for the bird he didn’t even get a chance to see.

“Well! I’ll continue on my way then!” Bai Yunfei wiped the blood

from his head and leapt off the tree to continue down his path.

.....

By nighttime, Bai Yunfei found another rather well-hidden spot to rest and recover in until the next morning.

And so after two days and three nights, Bai Yunfei finally found himself facing a wide open road to travel upon. He had been glad; for if he had to stay within that forest for another two days, Bai Yunfei would surely have gone mad.

“I don’t know where this is, but judging from that direction, then this place should lead me straight to Stonegroove City. And this direction should be....” Bai Yunfei paused for a moment, unsure of where the road would take him. Taking out a map from his space ring, he studied the parchment for a long time before answering himself, “If I go that way, then the next city is....Guyi City.”

“But what’s not known here is just how far away Guyi City is. I’d best find someone to make sure.” Bai Yunfei looked around the road to find someone, but to no avail.

“Forget it. I’ll start walking first and confirm it when I find someone on the way. As long as I go a little faster, I should be able to reach Guyi City.”

After making his decision, Bai Yunfei didn’t dawdle any longer. Seeing that the sun was already hanging up overhead, he took out a thatched straw hat and fastened it to his head. Then, with a jaunty folk song, he began to leisurely walk down the road.

.....

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Normal

Upgrade Level: +8

Defense: 2

Additional Defense: 5

Completely bored while traveling, Bai Yunfei had taken advantage of the clouds covering the sun to take his straw hat and upgrade it.

“A defensive strength of seven, that’s about the same level of power that could withstand a stone smashing into it. I wonder what effect it’d get if I upgrade it to +10?” Bai Yunfei looked at the straw hat with a curious eye as he begun to guess. “But this is just a crappy equipment you’d find anywhere, I bet there wouldn’t be anything special....”

Bai Yunfei had once upgraded an ordinary set of clothing to +10. As a result, its defensive power hadn’t even broken the double digit threshold and had an additional effect of having a 1% chance of increasing one’s defenses by ten if struck.

“Forget it, it’d be sad if it exploded on me. This hat has been with me for a long time, and it’s pretty good with shading me from the sun.” Now that the clouds had glided away for the sunlight to pass through, Bai Yunfei put the straw hat back on his head for protection. Shaking his right hand, several gleaming daggers appeared in it.

“An incomplete soul armament can absorb a little soulforce, that is what differentiate it from a regular weapon....but for the weapons I upgrade, then as long as the attack power doesn’t reach the minimum required to be a soul armament, it will need less soulforce to upgrade. This is a distinguishing point of my Upgrade Technique.”

Bai Yunfei glanced at the dagger in his hand, “Attack power of 157. In the eyes of the regular person, this is already a ‘magical weapon’ capable of peeling iron like it’s mud. For a soul cultivator, this is just barely strong enough to use. The incomplete soul

armament that the house of Jiang are selling has to be from the Crafting School. But even these type of incomplete soul armament are nothing more than scrap to be written off in the eyes of the Crafting School....”

“House of Jiang....Jiang Fan? Is he really a man from the Crafting School? He’s a Soul Ancestor and similar in age to brother Hong Yin. Then that means he’s another one of those rare to see talents. I wonder what rank he holds in the Crafting School....”

After living in the Green Willow School for several days, Bai Yunfei had a preliminary understanding of the world of soul cultivators. If there was a guide at hand, the average soul cultivator would need about ten or so years to awaken their soulforce. By the age of thirty, they’d become a Soul Warrior, but becoming in tune with one’s elemental energy was completely different, one had to be strong enough to automatically sense the one essence origin they were best suited for. But even then, there were plenty of people that trained hard for many years and were still incapable of sensing the existence of the elements. Some people were even forever stuck at the Soul Warrior stage for the rest of their lives. However, the average person would be able to become a Soul Sprite in their forties.

After becoming a Soul Sprite, one would be able to absorb the energy of the world and cultivate to strengthen their soulforce even more. After absorbing enough of the elements in the world and circulating their soulforce, one could reach a never ending strengthening effect while also connecting with the one essence element on a deeper level. The stronger a person became, the better the control they would have over their element.

When one became a Soul Sprite, it would take the majority of them to be in their fifties to become a Soul Ancestor whether they practiced in the elemental water or the elemental wind. However, becoming a Soul Exalt was many times harder than becoming a Soul Ancestor and was generally reached when a person was in

their eighties to a hundred.

After becoming a Soul Exalt, one wouldn't be able to use the words 'the majority' anymore. The Soul King level was a brand new level that only the exceptional leaders of their generation would be able to reach.

Naturally, this was only the average 'statistics'. The stronger a soul cultivator became, the more variables and complications that would arise--especially in the future so it was hard to lump everything together. Every day was yet another day that one person might possibly breathe their last breath. Inversely, every day was also another day that another person might come across a treasure or fortunate encounter with a guide that might boost one's strength. Like a coin toss, fortunate and misfortune were just another ordinary affair of the world.

Qiu Luliu of the Green Willow School became a Soul Sprite in her twenties. As a result, she was known to have a superb amount of talent. Hong Yin on the other hand became a Soul Exalt before his thirties, making him a once in ten thousand unique talent.

Bai Yunfei had been nineteen when he became a Soul Sprite and was thought to be exceptionally talented as well in their eyes. You Qingfeng had even wanted him to join the Wood School and nurture his talent there. But because Bai Yunfei had been adamant on joining the Crafting School, You Qingfeng could only give up his ideas. Bai Yunfei had been afraid to tell them that he had only became a soul cultivator the year before. If he did, Bai Yunfei knew that it would be very hard to explain everything. The Upgrade technique was his greatest secret that absolutely no one could learn about.

But Bai Yunfei had never thought himself to be a 'genius'. He knew that the only reason why he had became so strong so quickly was all because of the Upgrade technique along with the fireseed spirit mushrooms Hong Yin had given him before. Without those two, he would have never gotten to where he was now. One time,

for the sake of measuring his own cultivation rate without using the Upgrade technique, Bai Yunfei cultivated for nearly ten days before realizing that his soulforce had only gone up by a pitiful amount. He was better off using his Upgrade technique to use up his soulforce at once to gain a huge return.

As for Li Chengfeng....Bai Yunfei simply couldn't understand it at all at first. But it was only now that he had realized that Li Chengfeng's cultivation rate practically defied the heavens themselves--now that was what it meant to be a 'genius'!

Jiang Fan and Hong Yin were similar in age, but while a soul cultivator's strength was determined by their cultivation, they were generally grouped by their age in reality. But Bai Yunfei would wager that Jiang Fan's position within the Crafting School was undoubtedly a high one.

"It was good that I was able to run away fast enough last night. If I was blocked by him, then I doubt that he'd believe I was a student of the Crafting School. That'd bring some unwanted attention....when the time comes for when I meet him after I join the Crafting School, I'll have to make sure I thank him properly."

"Aah? I've strayed away from the topic, I need to continue upgrading this...." Bai Yunfei's unfocused eyes refocused on the dagger in his hand. "Upgrade." He spoke silently.

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Chapter 107: Tianming

As he walked, Bai Yunfei slowly began to upgrade the ten ‘Superior’ daggers he had traded for.

Unknowingly, the rising sun had become a setting sun. The harsh sunlight of day had become a comforting twilight as the sky began to dim.

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Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +8

Attack: 155

Additional Attack: 66

Upgrade Requirement: 61 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei glanced at the dagger in his hand before returning it to his space ring while in thought. “It has already reached 200 attack points by +8, that’s enough to put it on par with a soul armament. If I upgrade it past +8, it should gain an additional hundred attack points. That’s enough to be a human tier soul armament. Equipment of the ‘Superior’ tier has a chance of being destroyed after the eighth upgrade. It seems like only soul armaments can be upgraded to +10 without an inherent risk of being destroyed.”

“I’ve only upgraded four daggers and my soulpoints have been used up halfway. I’ll resume my thoughts after this then.” Considering his own situation, Bai Yunfei’s eyes narrowed. “I’ve used up about 1500 soulpoints or so. With my original 3600 soulpoints, I wonder how much longer it’ll take before I become a late-stage Soul Sprite...”

“I’ll wait for my soulforce to come back before I continue upgrading.” Bai Yunfei glanced up at the sky, “It’s getting late. I’ll find somewhere to rest for the night! Why is it that I haven’t seen anyone yet? How excellent my luck is...”

Bai Yunfei grumbled and moaned to himself as he walked for another half an hour before he suddenly stiffened. Seeing a group of people in the forest not too far away, Bai Yunfei saw a tent being dragged out along with a campfire. Several people sat around the fire and had a pile of things stacked right next to them.

“They have to be transport merchants.” Bai Yunfei thought back to the merchants he had once come into contact with every so often in the cities; these men weren’t that different from the ones he had seen before

Bai Yunfei felt overjoyed to see these men. Quickening his steps, Bai Yunfei soon came to a stop near the chattering group.

“Who goes there?” As soon as his figure came in close proximity of their area, the group had been alerted. Three robust-looking men immediately stood up to look at Bai Yunfei. Several others were still seated, but their hands inched vigilantly to the weapons at their sides as they scoured the area.

A security team for the transportation of goods would generally consist of several fighters of decent aptitude. Against a group of powerful mountain bandits they might be useless, but against an ordinary group of thieves, these fighters were more than enough to guarantee safety.

“There’s no need to be nervous, I mean no harm. I am by myself.” Bai Yunfei smiled amicably before realizing that the sky was already far too dark for anyone to see. Instead, he waved his hands to show that he was harmless while he spoke polite words to them.

“What are you doing?” A man with thick eyebrows looked at the youngster in front of him. Despite his stance loosening a tiny bit,

he was still questioning Bai Yunfei.

Coming to a stop just ten meters away, Bai Yunfei displayed a rather embarrassed look on his face, “I, uh, I’m just a young adult traveling the world. After an entire day of traveling, I finally found people and wished to share a meal. Are you all merchants? I hope that I can travel with you for some ways or pay for it if need be.”

“Han Yue, this young man here has to be all by himself.” Laughter could be heard from behind one of the larger men as a small-looking merchant came into view.

He wasn’t too tall, but his beard was quite long, and his eyes seemed a little unfocused. Overall, he had the air of an astute person without a roguish face. On the contrary, the smile on his face made him seem very friendly. With a nod to Bai Yunfei, he laughed, “Haha, you’re quite the jokester. Us crossing paths here is merely fate. If you wish to travel with us, then I don’t see the problem with that. I, Huang Wan, may be a small time shopkeeper, but even I don’t scrape after every bit of coin that comes my way. Don’t even mention money and just come with us as you please!”

“Is that so? Then you have my thanks, boss Huang!” Bai Yunfei warmly smiled and clasped his hands together in greeting. With a nod to every other man that was near him, he slowly made his way to the center where everyone else was.

“What should I call you, little one?” Huang Wan pulled Bai Yunfei to the side of the fire pit. Without the air of a shopkeeper to him, Huang Wan sat down with Bai Yunfei, and handed him a well-roasted chicken thigh.

“Bai Yunfei.”

“Ah, are you heading to Guyi City as well, little Bai?”

“Yes. I found myself lost within a forest just a few days ago. It was only today that I managed to make my way back out, but the trip was rather boring. Seeing everyone gathered here, I just had to

approach. I hope no one minds my intrusion.”

“Now now, none of that talk. We are on our way to Guyi City as well. You’re welcome to travel the rest of the way with us.”

“Thank you, boss Huang. I have some strength to my bones, if we ever come across trouble, I can lend my hand to help.” Bai Yunfei had found Huang Wan’s sincere and honest way of dealing with people rather refreshing.

“Oh? Are you a martial artist as well?” Huang Wan gave a surprised look to Bai Yunfei before shaking his head, “Haha, there is no need to worry about anything. This time, we have two rather indispensable figures in our group. With them here, even a bandit brigand would be dead men walking if they picked a fight.”

“Oh?” Bai Yunfei was skeptical, “Who are they?”

Huang Wan gave a look around to see if the coast was clear before whispering, “They’re two soul cultivators!”

It was then that Bai Yunfei discovered a single tent, pitched a hundred meters away, with two people sleeping. He saw them through the raised up tent flap. Bai Yunfei was accustomed to not using his soulsense to scour the area. He usually restrained his soulforce to the best of his ability so that a soul cultivator would completely miss him unless they were actively seeking him with their soulsense. The two soul cultivators within the tent were clearly the same as him, but Bai Yunfei wouldn’t press to much about their identities. Not only was it rude, it would incur objections from everyone.

For some strange reason, whenever Bai Yunfei looked at the tent, he felt a strange feeling. It was almost as if he felt something bad was about to happen...

Perhaps it was because Bai Yunfei had been staring at the tent with some shock, but Huang Wan thought Bai Yunfei was startled to hear the fact that there were two soul cultivators here. With a

pleased smile, he laughed, “The goods I’m transporting this time are quite precious, so I came myself to see it through. At the same time, I am the most relaxed I’ve ever been in my career. I wonder why these two soul cultivators designed their trip to accompany this small merchant, but without them, I would never risk this trip! I can only hope now that no bandit will come and try to test their luck. To anger soul cultivators would be leading a lamb to a slaughter!”

Bai Yunfei looked away with a faint smile. He didn’t want to show off and say that he was a soul cultivator as well. If possible, he wanted to play the part of an ordinary civilian just a little longer. It was usually a refreshing time when he did.

“Boss Huang, I’ve wandered around the forest for several days without rest, so I’m quite tired and wish to rest. If... If I could ask for the arrangements to be made.” Bai Yunfei polished off the chicken thigh and politely declined the cups of wine handed to him for a canteen of water instead as he spoke to Huang Wan.

“Oh, there’s no problem at all!” Huang Wan looked left and right as if afraid of accidentally waking up the soul cultivators before speaking in a low voice, “Tianming! Come on over!”

“Yes yes, I’m coming, I’m coming.” A puerile voice could be heard from another tent to the side as a fifteen to sixteen year old laborer youth came running out. His clothes were clearly not his own since they looked quite big on him. With his sleeves flying over his hands, the youth came running toward Huang Wan with a smile, “Uncle Huang, I’ve laid out the beds in every tent for everyone to sleep in.”

“Haha, thank you for your hard work, but I’ve said before you don’t need to be so proactive. It’s almost as if you live for these odd jobs.” Huang Wan laughed while the other men to the side began to tease Tianming. Some of them had even rubbed Tianming’s head with exaggerations of his diligence.

Bai Yunfei was startled to see this youth, for he... he was a soul cultivator! However, his strength was lower than Bai Yunfei's, nor was he suppressing his soulforce. Although he wasn't deliberately releasing it, the amount of soulforce that was leaking out from him wasn't enough for a regular person to notice, but for someone like Bai Yunfei, it was as clear as day.

Curiously, Huang Wan had just been 'worshipping' soul cultivators, but his treatment of this youth was exemplary ordinary. This youth had to be pretending to be an ordinary person in front of everyone else.

"This is little Bai Yunfei; he'll be traveling with us, so bring him to a tent rest in." Huang Wan spoke before turning back to Bai Yunfei. "Little Bai, this is Tianming. You'll be sleeping with him tonight."

"Ah, okay. Then I'll have to thank brother Tianming for his troubles." Bai Yunfei nodded his head.

"There's no troubles at all. Brother Bai, if you'd follow me, our tent is on the right side." Tianming smiled and waved his hand. Pulling Bai Yunfei along, they began to walk toward a tent at a corner of the camp.

Entering the tent, Tianming began to tidy up the hay to roll out a sleeping mat for the two. Then taking out another two pillows from his knapsack, he placed them down with a satisfied nod of his head. He then whirled around to look at Bai Yunfei.

"Brother Bai, let's introduce ourselves formally now! I'm Ye Tianming. Ye as in the leaves of a tree, and Tianming like the dawn that comes after night! Pleased to make your acquaintance brother Bai Yunfei!"

The innocent and straightforward eyes of Ye Tianming had nearly caused Bai Yunfei to laugh out loud. This was clearly a naive youth new to the ways of the world, but it was because of this naivety that made Bai Yunfei feel a lot closer to him.

“I’m Bai Yunfei, Bai as in white and Yunfei as in the floating clouds. Pleased to make your acquaintance, Tianming.”

“Where is brother Bai headed?” Tianming sat on a mat with clear curiosity in his voice while waited for his question to be answered.

“I’m heading to the Great Plains Province, you?”

“Me? Haha, I came out to play around for a while, so I’m preparing to return home. Once I reach Guyi City, I’ll head on to my home in Gaoyi City.” Tianming smiled as if he had been on a ‘sightseeing tour’ around the place. His eyes began to light up, “Hey, we’ll be traveling on the same road now! Who knows, maybe we’ll be traveling again with each other! Brother Bai, what do you think?”

“Eh...” Bai Yunfei didn’t know how to respond, but with a quick reaction, he replied, “Sounds fine to me. Having someone guide me is what I’ve been looking for all this time. Did you just join with this merchant group as well? With your status of a soul cultivator, it’s quite interesting to see you enjoy working these odd jobs...”

“Not at all, not at all. It’s just that I’ve never done stuff like this before back home. Plus, soul cultivators are people too, but I never thought that being a soul cultivator would make me better than anyone else...” Tianming shook his head with an embarrassed smile. Merely seconds after he finished speaking, his eyes flew wide open in absolute shock at what Bai Yunfei had just said.

“You... you know that I’m a soul cultivator?”

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Chapter 108: Another Encounter

“You... you know that I’m a soul cultivator?”

Tianming’s eyes grew wide as he stared at Bai Yunfei in astonishment.

Bai Yunfei made a zipping motion with his hand to signify that Ye Tianming was speaking far too loud. With a faint smile, Bai Yunfei said, “Haha, don’t be so nervous. I won’t tell anyone else; I’ll keep your secret.”

“If... if you know, then you must be a soul cultivator too!” Tianming immediately whispered after realizing that Bai Yunfei was a soul cultivator.

With a nod of his head, Bai Yunfei walked over to the nearby chair and sat down. “Yes. We are both soul cultivators, and we will cooperate with one another. If you don’t wish to reveal yourself, it’s only natural that I won’t reveal you. However, I have no intentions of telling them I am one either. So, how about you don’t tell them either, okay?”

“Aah? Oh... uh... okay...” Tianming looked as if he was out of it. Dazed, he finally responded, “I can’t sense your soulforce, so that means you’re stronger than me! Why is it that you don’t want to reveal yourself? As a soul cultivator, you’re still willing to mix with the civilians? Even more, the way you talked with them was completely unlike a soul cultivator...”

“Eh? What’s so strange about it? Haha, do I have to be so high and mighty to ‘be’ a soul cultivator? Didn’t you just say soul cultivators are people too? And that you never thought that soul cultivators were ever a step higher than any regular person? Coincidentally, I feel the same way.”

“Really?” Tianming’s face lit up in excitement, “Do you really think that way too, brother Bai?”

Ye Tianming let out a sigh as if he was pretending to be an old, mature person. “A lot of soul cultivators feel as if they are far more important than any regular civilian, and would hate to be seen with one. Even those who don’t particularly care as much try not to get too close to a civilian in their minds. Even those two soul cultivators in that tent are no exception. While they’re polite, they don’t talk unless necessary, and never mingle with us...”

“Who cares what they do?” Bai Yunfei laughed. “Aren’t they free to do what they are free to do? As long as you follow your mindset without any problems, then who cares what others might think. It’s not like you’re living for them.”

Tianming stared blankly at Bai Yunfei for a long while before his spirit finally returned to him, “I... I can live for myself? My parents always said that... to be born to the house of Ye is to serve the family for one’s entire life. For the family, one must swallow their pride and tolerate our grievances for the sake of the development of our family — even if it means to sacrifice one’s own life...”

“For the family huh...” Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows knit together in thought, “That is something I don’t understand, but even if it’s family, you shouldn’t have to swallow your pride to work for the family. Even if you come across some sort of trouble, you have to resolve it willingly and not be forced by another. Do as you yourself wants to do. Even if it’s hard or tiresome, do it so you have no regrets. Men have to be happy in their lives, don’t you agree?”

“That... I... I don’t know...” Tianming shook his head. His eyes reflected his confusion with a blank stare.

“Oh, well. I don’t understand it much myself either.” Bai Yunfei smiled in embarrassment. “I was only just saying what popped up in my mind. In short, if you can, do what you want to the best of your ability. Be free and easy and live without regrets.”

“Do what I want to do?” Tianming remained clueless for a little

longer before a look of realization overcame his face. With a wide grin, he replied, “Yes! That’s it! Do what I want! Hah, staying at home was suffocating me to death! Even after running away for two months, what danger was there? I had a blast playing around!”

“Haha, well, as long as you’re happy.” Bai Yunfei nodded his head. “Ah, Tianming, your house is in Gaoyi City, right? Then do you know what type of family the house of Liu is?”

“Eh? Are you talking about the Liuqi family? What? Are you familiar with the house of Liu?”

“No, it’s not like that. I have a friend that’s familiar with the house of Liu; they know that I should be traveling through Gaoyi City and so they gave me a letter. I was told to go find the house of Liu should I ever need help. I don’t know them, so I wanted to ask around.”

“Oh, I see now...” Tianming didn’t ask any more questions and instead began to think. “The house of Liu is one of the three ruling families in Gaoyi City. My house of Ye and the house of Zhao are similar to them in strength, but several of their senior members are disciples of the Wood School. They have a special connection with the Wood school because of those disciples. Still, it’s not as though they need that type of support to threaten people since they’re a very moderate family to begin with.”

“Oh, is that right?” Bai Yunfei gave a thoughtful nod before suddenly asking, “You’re part of the house of Ye? Does that mean your family is one of the three ruling families in the city?”

“Crap! I let it slip!” Tianming blanched when he realized he had revealed far too much. With an embarrassed wave of his hands, he responded, “Er... hehe, let’s keep this a secret from everyone, okay? I haven’t told anyone else, but if they found out, then there’s no way we would be able to talk normally again.”

“Don’t worry, I won’t tell. Well then, it’s getting late. I’ll be resting first. Let’s talk tomorrow. I haven’t rested for several days,

so at last I can finally sleep in peace!” Bai Yunfei let out a yawn before laying his head on the pillow and closing his eyes.

Tianming didn’t know what else to say, but when he saw Bai Yunfei had fallen asleep, he decided not to say anything more. Laying down on his own bed while deep in thought, Tianming finally fell asleep several moments later.

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Without even cultivating, Bai Yunfei woke up the next morning in a refreshed mood. Seeing how bright the sky was outside, Bai Yunfei noticed that no one else was up yet. Sitting crossed-legged on his bed, Bai Yunfei began to slowly inspect his injuries.

Several moments later when the day became even brighter, Bai Yunfei finally reopened his eyes with a satisfied smile. “They’re pretty much healed with no aftereffects. My soulforce has increased even more too. It looks like my strength increases explosively after experiencing danger! But... I hope that such situations don’t come often. I don’t like this way of increasing my strength.”

“Eh? Brother Bai, you’re up already? I was just about to wake you for breakfast.”

Upon walking out from the tent, Bai Yunfei came across Tianming, who had been in the middle of completing some labor. In his hand was a broken fan, and his face was filled with soot. His hair had even some leftover leaves and branches stuck in it—clearly he had just been cooking the breakfast meals for today.

“When I woke up you were already in the middle of your cultivation, so I didn’t want to bother you. Your porridge is all heated up for you to eat. If you can wash yourself up in the brook, we can eat breakfast and then continue on our way.” Tianming pointed to the brook to the right of them for Bai Yunfei to wash up.

“Alright. I’ll go do that.” Bai Yunfei nodded, but seeing how

grimy Tianming was, he couldn't help but smile. "Hey, Tianming. Why does a young master like you like to do such odd jobs like these? You're so dirty, why don't you go wash up too."

"It's fun! I could never do this back at home... haha. Fine, I'll go wash up." Tianming shook his head with a chuckle, and followed Bai Yunfei to the brook.

After cleaning up, Bai Yunfei began to wring his hands to dry himself off. As soon as he was about to call for Tianming, a furious howl suddenly shocked Bai Yunfei, causing him to fall face-first back into the water.

"Pervert! Do you still deny it!? You're still following the young miss!" The voice of a middle-aged woman could suddenly be heard from behind. Even the far away men were startled and began to look on over.

Bai Yunfei trembled as he turned around to see the two people right behind him. Quirking his lips in embarrassment, he replied, "Au... aunty, how coincidental. We meet again... but, I've explained before, I'm no pervert..."

The sudden newcomers had been the two women Jing Mingfeng had played around with back in Stonegroove City. The ones who had later fought Bai Yunfei.

"Hmph! You're still pretending! Once a pervert, always a pervert! If we meet again here, then that means you're not going to give up on the young miss!?" Aunty Zhao unconsciously hid the young miss behind her as she stared vigilantly down at Bai Yunfei with a furious expression.

Unable to laugh or cry, Bai Yunfei helplessly replied, "I've said it before, aunty. This is really a coincidence. If I was following you, would I really let you see me here out in the open like an idiot? It wasn't me before, I've told you someone disguised themselves as me. I've found him already though too..."

“Hmph, then where is he!? Call him out to prove it!” Aunty Zhao was unrelenting against Bai Yunfei and began to demand answers from him.

“Well... he and I already split ways...”

“What a load of cock-and-bull! These are all just lies!” The furious expression on her face grew even more angry before her soulforce began to surge from her body. Lifting her right foot off the ground, she then gave it a heavy stomp. As the elemental earth entered it, a wash-basin-sized stone flew half a meter into the air next to her foot. With a single kick, the aunty sent the stone flying at Bai Yunfei with a whistling sound.

Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows knit together in annoyance. With a snort, he stepped half a step and brought his right hand forward to punch it.

“Bang!!”

A bright-red glow could be seen. The stone that had shot at Bai Yunfei was pulverized into dust which scattered with the wind.

“Aunty, you are far too much of a bully. I’ve never done you any wrongs, yet this is the second time you’ve tried to start something. If you still wish to fight today, then I won’t be as polite as I was last time!” Bai Yunfei raised his right fist with an angry scowl.

“Aunty Zhao, don’t get angry. This mister isn’t following us. Boss Huang said that a traveler joined the group just yesterday night. It has to be him. If he really was a scoundrel, then would he really act like this...” A slender, clean hand grabbed the aunty’s wrist. At the same time, a gentle, warm voice could be heard.

“Young miss, do you really believe his nonsense!?” The aunty gave Bai Yunfei an indignant glare.

The young woman smiled and shook her head. “Aunty, I know you’re afraid of me being harmed, but you can’t be too emotional either. I’ve said before that we may have gotten the wrong person,

but you're still so stubborn. Look at that mister's attitude and eyes. They're completely different than the one we met before."

"Miss, but I..." The aunty wanted to say more, but the young woman shook her head, causing the aunty to sigh and take in two deep breaths to calm herself. Turning to walk back to the woman's side, the aunty continued to stare vigilantly at Bai Yunfei.

"Mister, my Aunty Zhao is a very rash person. If you were insulted by this, please forgive us." The young woman moved forward. She smiled at Bai Yunfei and spoke with a gentle voice.

Like before, this young woman wore a white dress and her hair was like a waterfall on her shoulders. Two strands of her hair routed behind her head. They were tied with a silver ribbon that joined several thousand more strands. Almost as if just blowing on her skin could make it less fair, her lips were cherry-red, and her eyebrows were long and shapely. When she smiled, the two dimples on both sides of her face were clearly visible so that she looked rather cute and sweet-tempered.

"Oh, this young lady is quite sensible. I should be thanking you. This entire thing was a misunderstanding from the very beginning. I was framed..." Bai Yunfei's eyes hovered over the young woman's face for a moment before turning elsewhere. It was not that he did not want to look at her. Rather, it was the knife-sharp glare coming from behind her that made Bai Yunfei feel unwilling to look.

"Haha, I believe in mister. You are a strong one that doesn't need to explain anything to us. Your expression is a healthy one, unlike the rogue that attacked us that night..." The woman laughed again. "Ah, may I know what to call mister?"

"Oh. I am Bai Yunfei. Bai as in white, and Yunfei as in the clouds that float freely in the sky... and you are?"

Hearing Bai Yunfei's name clearly stunned the young woman for a moment. Looking up to meet his eyes, she seemed as if she was

doubting him for a moment. However, after seeing that there was nothing unnatural in his words or stare, she looked away and turned her head down. Bai Yunfei didn't know if it was his imagination or not, but he could swear that he could see just a tiny bit of a blush on her face.

When the aunt heard Bai Yunfei speak, her eyebrows rose into the air. For some reason, she a furious glare appeared on her face as if Bai Yunfei's words had insulted her in some manner. Just as she was about to open her mouth to speak, the young woman cut in first.

"I am... Tang Xinyun."

Chapter 109: 'The Heart Flies With the Clouds', Tang Xinyun

“Xinyun?”

Bai Yunfei was slightly surprised to hear her name. Unable to stop himself from repeating it, he thought back to the phrase ‘The heart flies with the clouds.’ This phrase was very similar to his own name. Was it because of this that she felt embarrassed?

“No, no. ‘Yun as in the character for citrus...’” The blush on the girl’s face seemed to deepen a little as she explained herself.

TL Note: The character ‘Yun’ in her name is very similar to the character ‘cloud’ in Bai Yunfei’s name.

“Oh, I see.” Bai Yunfei shook his head in embarrassment. Although he felt that she seemed to be hiding something, he didn’t wish to bother her with anymore questions. Looking around, he said, “Miss Tang is here to wash and bathe, am I right? Then I won’t disturb you anymore. Tianming, let’s go.”

“Wha? Oh! Coming, coming.” Tianming snapped back to awareness and hurried after him.

Watching Bai Yunfei leave with a vigilant stare, Aunty Zhao finally looked away and retrieved a washbasin from her space ring for Tang Xinyun to use to bathe.

“Young miss, do you still think he’s not that same scoundrel? Look at how cheap he took your name to be, hmpf! He has to be doing that on purpose!” Aunty Zhao scoffed at the back of Bai Yunfei.

“Aunty Zhao, don’t be so suspicious. I see this was only a coincidental meeting... he couldn’t have known my name beforehand in any case.” Tang Xinyun washed her face and wiped away the water with a towel.

“How could it be... when the madame gave you your name, she hoped that you would not be dyed by the ruthlessness of the clan. She hoped that your heart would be free and without restraints like a cloud. Freedom in its flight, she decided on the name “Xinyun” from the phrase ‘The heart flies with the clouds.’ She named you with the other character for ‘Yun’ because it was more suited for a female. He said his name was Bai Yunfei. That has to be a deliberate attempt at copying your name!”

Tang Xinyun’s face reddened a bit, but looking rather helplessly at her aunty, she replied, “Aunty Zhao, do you think he would know even the meaning behind my name?”

“Oh. That’s...” The older woman’s face went rigid as she realized that this thought of hers was rather far-fetched.

“Okay then. Aunty Zhao, don’t be so hostile to him. Whether he is the same person from that night, it seems he doesn’t have any ill intentions now, isn’t that right? It would be good to get to know more people with the time we spend traveling.”

“That’s... fine then. As long as he doesn’t treat you impolitely, I won’t start trouble with him...”

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“Brother Bai, why did that Aunty call you a ‘pervert?’ What did you do? Did you — don’t tell me you...” On the other side, Tianming and Bai Yunfei were walking back to the camp. Turning to look back at Tang Xinyun, his eyes began to sparkle as he gave a mischievous smile to Bai Yunfei.

“Brat, don’t frame me for something I didn’t do!” Bai Yunfei glared at him and slapped his head in befuddlement. “I am a man of honor, how could I possibly do something so vulgar like that!?”

“If you didn’t anything, then you didn’t do it, I didn’t say anything...” Tianming massaged his hurt head in discontent. Seeing the ‘anger’ in Bai Yunfei’s eyes made him realize something

however, “But brother Bai, you’re really amazing! That stone the aunty shot out wasn’t a small one, how did you deflect it so easily? I know that that Aunty is at least a Soul Sprite, how strong are you then?”

“Just like her, I am a mid-stage Soul Sprite.” Bai Yunfei replied.

“Woah!! A mid-stage Soul Sprite! You’re as strong as my older brother, and he’s already thirty years old! I can see that you’re no older than twenty, but you’re just as strong!” Tianming cried out in complete and utter adoration.

Not sure how he should react in this situation, Bai Yunfei turned to look off in the distance where the merchant Huang was.

Although it had been a rather casual attack from the Aunty, it was filled with a very strong amount of soulforce. For the average commoner, this was an extremely astonishing attack. When Bai Yunfei had crushed it to powder, it was a feat of unbelievable strength to them, yet he had done so with ease!

“Litt-no... excuse me. Lord Bai, I didn’t think that you’d... you’d be a soul cultivator... I was neglectful in the past. Please forgive me for any slight I might have committed against you.”

“Boss Huang, what are you saying? It was me that was under your consideration. How could you apologize to me? I hid my identity on purpose. Just treat me like you did yesterday, there’s no need to be so polite.” Bai Yunfei shook his head with a smile.

“But...” Huan Wan was just a commoner, but he was a clever one. Seeing the sincerity in Bai Yunfei’s eyes, his hesitation disappeared in an instant. Laughing, he replied, “Fine then... I’ll be calling you little Bai from now on. Who would have thought that you’d be a mighty soul cultivator? And you’re so amiable as well! It’s really hard to believe. Then, please look after us for the rest of this journey, little Bai.”

Huang Wan laughed. He seemed back to normal. However, there

was still a glint of adoration in his eyes. As astute as he was, he naturally couldn't let this opportunity with such a strong soul cultivator slip by him. As a merchant, this was a very rare chance to evade any trouble.

"That's only natural. If I can help in any possible way, then please don't hesitate to ask. I will do my best." Bai Yunfei nodded.

"Haha, then I must thank you, little Bai. We've already prepared breakfast, come and eat then!" Huang Wan's laugh made his eyes turn to slits. Giving a signal to the people next to him, Huang Wan had several of them immediately scoop out some of the congee to serve Bai Yunfei straight away.

Shaking his head at the respectful attitude of these men, Bai Yunfei accepted the bowl and began to talk to Huang Wan as he ate. However, sometimes he would cast a glance over to Tang Xinyun and her companion.

Seeing the two of them walk over slowly, Bai Yunfei waved on over to them. "Miss Tang, come and eat with everyone so that we can leave earlier!"

Narrowing her eyebrows together, the aunty barked in annoyance, "Have someone send our meals to our tent, we'll..."

"No, Aunty. We should eat here so we can leave earlier. We can't delay mister Huang anymore than we already have." Tang Xinyun interrupted the aunty. Nodding her head to Bai Yunfei, she walked over to his side. With a shake of her hand, a small stool appeared from her space ring, and was placed down for her to sit upon.

Unable to do anything else, the aunty could only follow close behind. Taking out two small bowls to scoop congee into, she handed a bowl to Tang Xinyun and began to eat.

"Ah, where is miss Tang planning on going?" After finishing the meal, Bai Yunfei asked Tang Xinyun as they watched everyone else pack up the campgrounds.

“Why do you care where we go? Are you trying to follow us forever!?” Before Tang Xinyun could even speak, the aunty spat out a reply.

“Ehm...” Bai Yunfei stared balefully at the aunty for a moment before shrugging his shoulders. “Fine then. In order not to make aunty misunderstand, I’ll say where I’m going first. I wish to pass through Guyi City to get to Gaoyi City before ultimately entering the Pingchuan Province. Now, where are you two traveling to?”

“You! You...” The aunty’s eyes flew wide open as if she was preparing to get angry once more.

“Well then. Judging from aunty’s reaction, I can assume that we’ll be sharing the same path? What a coincidence that is. Why don’t we travel together until we reach Gaoyi City then? From that point on, it would be pointless to travel as if we were strangers.”

“Hmph! Forget it! We’ll hire a chariot at Guyi City and hurry on our way! We won’t inconvenience you with your ‘consideration’ for us!” The aunty adamantly refused.

“Well, if it’s like that, then there’s no helping it...”

Bai Yunfei laughed. He had only asked on a whim, so if they declined his good intentions, there was no point in saying anything more.

Chapter 110: Beaten Black and Blue

Not too long after their exchange, everyone packed up their things and readied the horses and carriages to depart for Guyi City.

A man named Zhang Yuehan led the group. As per his wishes, Huang Wan stood in the middle while Bai Yunfei walked slowly from behind.

Bai Yunfei would often times talk with Tang Xinyun while Tianming would interject into the conversation with a smile and a word of his own. Naturally, aunty Zhao would stand between Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun as if guarding her from Bai Yunfei.

From the conversation, Bai Yunfei learned that aunty Zhao's full name was Zhao Mancha, and she was the maid for Tang Xinyun's mother. Zhao Mancha had also been responsible for being the nanny of Tang Xinyun, so when she went out to travel, Tang Xinyun's mother told the aunty to travel with her for protection. Her homelands were southwest of the Northern Cliff Province in the Forest Pass Province, but the specifics had not been divulged to him. Naturally, Bai Yunfei had taken the hint and inquired no more.

However, for a servant woman like Zhao Mancha to be a Soul Sprite, Bai Yunfei could at least guess that the family they belonged to was very strong to say the least. After an even closer observation, Bai Yunfei could detect a glint of sadness whenever Tang Xinyun mentioned her mother. It seemed that this 'home' of hers was not filled with much love for the mother and daughter pair...

After 'revealing' his own identity, Tianming decided to forego his secrecy to talk in a torrential downpour of words about how life was for him in Gaoyi City. He talked about how he had been bored to death within his home, and how the self-indulgent second generation of the aristocratic families made him despise their

arrogance and type. Almost as if he never had anyone to say this to before, Tianming had been exuberant in his words. He had even talked about several ‘secrets’ that shouldn’t be said, such as how there was a morbidly obese swine of a man from the house of Liu. That man loved to pretend he was handsome, and Tianming had always wanted nothing more than to beat the fat away. However, the fatty had a younger sister that was quite pleasing with eyes that were limpid and intelligent...

Bai Yunfei practically turned bright-red with what he was hearing. Clearly Tianming had been stuck in his house for far too long. He was all too happy to ‘flew the coop’ and say what had been making him so sad the entire time. Of course, this was also possible because Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun didn’t give him the feeling of ‘wanting to hurt him’, so he had seen no need to put a filter on what he said. For as much as he said, whenever it concerned the secret matters of their respective clans, Ye Tianming knew of the proper limits and stopped whenever it was getting too personal.

Traveling slowly until the sun set, the group found another open clearing for everyone to set up for the night. According to Huang Wan, they were still roughly halfway there from Stonegroove City to Guyi City. With another three days or so, they would arrive at their destination.

During the day, they would come across several other travelers. When there were trails off the main path, small parties from the main group would quickly travel down the path to find a resting spot.

Seeing how everyone was busy with their own tasks and how he was useless to help them, Bai Yunfei thought from sunrise to sunset and even deep into the night. He was thinking of a way he could help. Finally, he decided that he could stroll around the troop and find some wild game to hunt for everyone to eat later that night.

Walking within a thousand meters of the group, Bai Yunfei

hoped that he could find hare, pheasant, or any other type of game. Why search within just a thousand miles and why not even farther? What rubbish! If he were to get lost, they would have to come find him, and how embarrassing that would be!?

“Wha-what a fat pheasant! And there’s three of them! Haha, we’ll be eating well tonight!” Bai Yunfei’s eyes sparkled as he observed the three pheasants in the brush in front of him. With a swing of his hand, three daggers flew out...

After tying up the claws of the freshly-killed pheasants with some reeds found nearby, Bai Yunfei slowly made his way out of the forest. Bai Yunfei felt a happy sensation as he made his way back.

It was only after he made it back to the main path that he realized he was well over a thousand meters away from the area where the rest of them were. Sweat-dripping in shame, Bai Yunfei whirled around to walk back when, all of a sudden, a sound from behind had startled him.

“Eh? Bai Yunfei, is that really you!?”

This was a dreadfully terrifying experience for Bai Yunfei. If a Soul Sprite like him wasn’t able to detect someone so close to him, then Bai Yunfei shuddered to imagine what would have happened to him should that person bear ill-will to him...

Bai Yunfei’s continued to walk without turning back for several meters. Then, he quickly turned around to whirl the daggers in his right hand. However, it was then that Bai Yunfei realized that instead of daggers, he was still holding the three pheasants he had just hunted. Hurriedly shaking his right hand to withdraw two daggers from his space ring instead, he looked vigilantly at the person in front of him with the daggers ready to let loose.

A youth with a nose as small as his eyes could be seen standing several meters away. The youth looked at him with a rather strange expression that could perhaps be interpreted as joy.

“Who are you?” Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows knit together as he scanned the youth with his soulsense. The youth looked like a regular civilian without any noticeable features. However, the fact that he hadn’t been able to detect this youth had given him a queer feeling — this feeling was rather familiar...

“This is great — you’re alive! I heard the commotion last night just outside the city walls. I thought you went and got yourself killed!” The youth let out a sigh in exuberant joy.

“Jing Mingfeng!” Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows flew up on his face when he realized that this person was in fact Jing Mingfeng! It was only that Jing Mingfeng had changed his physical appearance again.

Winking his eyes, the youth gave a grin, “Who else could it be but me? Haha, Bai Yunfei, finding out that you’re still alive is just great news! If you went and died, then I’d be too ashamed to live in peace.”

Even as he spoke, there was not the slightest tint of shame to his smile. It was almost as if Jing Mingfeng was regarding him as a very old friend. Walking toward Bai Yunfei, his arms opened wide as if to give him a hug.

He bore no ill will at all. Having seen Bai Yunfei safe and sound made his heart feel at peace. At the same time, he was overly happy about everything.

Bai Yunfei felt his emotions stir. Placing the pheasants in his hand down on the ground, he held his arms out and began to stroll briskly to Jing Mingfeng.

Smiling even wider now, Jing Mingfeng picked up his pace with a beaming smile, “It’s great to see that yo-”

“You bastard! I should arrest you! Give back my innocent name!!” The instant the two got close to one another, Bai Yunfei’s hands flew swiftly to Jing Mingfeng neck. He began to strangle him with his teeth grinding against each other in rage.

“I... I... I can explain! Just let me... let me apologize, alright? Haha...” Jing Mingfeng’s face turned red as he tried to breath.

“Is there a damn point to your apologies! I was nearly killed by you, and even that aside, I was still called a ‘depraved pervert’ because of you! I’ll nail your liver to the wall, damn it! Do you realize just how many people saw me there that day!? My reputation! Why!? You bastard!” Bai Yunfei grabbed Jing Mingfeng’s collar to shake it before ultimately throwing him ten meters away.

Jing Mingfeng flew through the air before finally falling back to the ground. Bai Yunfei had already caught up to him before he hit the ground, and was ready to trample him to death.

“No! Just let me explain! I can apologize! I sai-”

“Apologize my ass! I’ve so many complaints. I don’t even know where to start with you! I swear, if I ever meet you again, I’ll beat you so badly that your mom won’t even recognize you! Apologize? Just wait until I’m through with you!” Bai Yunfei furiously snarled in a fit of rage.

The mixed sounds of pummeling and shrieks of pain could be heard from so far that they caught the attention of Tang Xinyun and the others.

Several minutes later, the shrieks grew even more quiet as if the owner was growing tired. Even the pummeling sounds grew quiet as well...

“Lord Bai, what happe-”

A single startled yelp could be heard, causing Bai Yunfei to turn his head up. Right in front of him were Tang Xinyun, Zhao Mancha, Tianming, and even Huang Wan. Stunned, the entire group could only look at him and then at what seemed to be a... man?

“Miss Tang, Aunty Zhao, you came at a good time, I’ve got proof

to clear my name!” Bai Yunfei held Jing Mingfeng up by the clothes as he spoke to the two females. “This is the person who impersonated me that day and made trouble for you! He is the ‘depraved pervert,’ and has nothing to do with me!”

“Ehhh? Are you saying this person pretended to be you?”

Tang Xinyun studied Jing Mingfeng. He looked more like a pig than a man in the face from the beating. Her eyebrows knit together almost like she was not sure if that was the right question to ask.

Chapter 111: A Deal?

Having been beaten black and blue, Jing Mingfeng was startled to see Tang Xinyun. He did not expect to come across her party here as well.

“This is him, miss Tang! He’s the one that’s responsible for everything, not me!” Bai Yunfei glared at Jing Mingfeng as if giving him a stare that promised pain if the answer was not said in truth.

“Uhhh...” Jing Mingfeng remained deep in thought for a moment before smiling at Tang Xinyun with a smile that looked even uglier than his crying face. With slight vibrato, he said, “Haha, miss, we meet again. I was only joking around last time, I hope you won’t pay it too much attention...”

“It really is you!” Before he could even finish speaking, Tang Xinyun’s face had changed. His words, his eyes, his personality — even though Jing Mingfeng’s face was beaten to the point of being unrecognizable and his eyes were only slits from the swelling, she had immediately recognized who he was.

Jing Mingfeng had suppressed his soulforce with some sort of technique so that the spread of his soulforce wouldn’t be remembered too clearly last time they met. However, when he stood next to Bai Yunfei, Tang Xinyun could see a large similarity between Jing Mingfeng and the one that assaulted her that night.

A furious surge of anger swelled within Tang Xinyun’s heart when she realized this fact. However, before she could even move, the aunty next to her immediately stepped into action.

“Bastard, it’s you!!” A furious aura began to radiate from the aunty’s body. It was not soulforce, but ‘fury’. With a roar, she flew between Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng. She grabbed the latter. The woman threw him like a sack of potatoes, and then she chased after him before he could fall back down.

In the midst of his flight, Jing Mingfeng couldn't help but let out a startled cry, "Holdup! Aunty, you're here too!?"

"Aunty! I was only joking around with you that day. Don't lower yourself to bickering with someone younger! I—" Before he could even finish speaking, the older woman had already grabbed at the collar of his shirt to slam him into the ground. Afterward, the sounds of someone being pummeled could be heard.

(Because of the graphic nature of the scene, 527 characters were omitted here...)

Bai Yunfei's lips twitched at the sight, but he didn't bother to speak out to stop her. Instead, he was feeling some joy at Jing Mingfeng's pain. Why would he stop her?

Tang Xinyun knew that she would not seriously harm him despite the anger her aunty felt. Jing Mingfeng did not use his soulforce to defend himself, meaning that he accepted his physical punishment, and since Tang Xinyun was angry at Jing Mingfeng, she would not intervene either.

Tianming's eyes sparkled with a strange light as if he found this violent exchange in front of him an interesting sight. He did not seem like he would interfere.

The merchant Huang? Why would he interfere?

So, after Jing Mingfeng was beaten by Bai Yunfei, he had to survive another ten minutes of the beating by the hands of Zhao Mancha...

.....

The flames of the bonfire burned brightly that night as everyone hastened to prepare dinner. Bai Yunfei sat on a rock a hundred meters away. By his side sat a pig-headed man — wait — it was Jing Mingfeng.

Seeing how Jing Mingfeng was grimacing right next to him, Bai Yunfei couldn't help but smile. In truth, Jing Mingfeng's wounds

were superficial and would only take several minutes to heal if he used his soulforce. The reason why he was still in such a state was because aunty Zhao had promised that should he use his soulforce within a day to heal his wounds, then she would beat him even more than the first time...

“Well, I can see that aunty Zhao’s anger has subsided. You can consider that one of our debts settled. Be happy!” Bai Yunfei slapped Jing Mingfeng on the shoulder with a smile.

“Don’t be happy about my pains. If not for me taking mind to keep the pace, the Aunty wouldn’t be like this at all!” Jing Mingfeng grumbled before the bruises on his face twitched and caused him to grimace again.

“Fine then, moving on.” Bai Yunfei shook his head without the intention of joking with him again. “I saw that you were untouched when we met. How did you escape without being hurt?”

The expression on Jing Mingfeng’s face stiffened (Not that it was noticeable on his pig-headed face). Thinking about it, he turned to look far away and slowly narrated, “When I was being chased by the Soul Ancestor, he looked as if he was trying to see if I had any other friends with me. After some time, he clearly lost his patience and began to reveal his killing intent. Just then, I was lucky to find a midnight mourning procession for a wealthy family with over a hundred people in attendance. I just had to blend in with the crowd, use my technique to change my face, and hide my soulforce. Then escaping was... simple. I could hear the explosions from the direction you ran off in. I wanted to check up on you, but the one chasing after me decided to run that way, so I decided not to go. I knew that if you escaped, there’d be no way you’d return to the city, so I left in this direction as well. I didn’t expect to run into you again, how coincidental...”

“It was that simple?” Bai Yunfei stared in doubt.

“Aye, it was that simple.” Jing Mingfeng blinked in response.

“Fine then, I’ll believe you for now.” Bai Yunfei had no desire to continue his questions as he moved onto the next topic. “Did you... really not do anything that night? Why were there so many people after your blood? Even two Soul Ancestors came.”

“I really don’t know either!” Jing Mingfeng shook his head. “I wasn’t lying. That night I was planning on using your face to sneak into the household to see if there was anything I could use. But who would have known that that household would have so many Soul Sprites and other guys in there! The two Soul Ancestors in the room were apparently discussing something, but I didn’t hear a single word of it. They must have thought I heard it all. That must have been why they were so adamant...”

Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows knit together in deep thought. If Jing Mingfeng was telling the complete truth, then this news wouldn’t be such juicy information. It was truly a coincidental chance upon someone else’s secret that made Jing Mingfeng a target to kill. Bai Yunfei was merely unfortunate enough to fall into the crossfire...

“Oh, what about you? How did you escape that night? When I looked at the scene later, a huge area of the stone forest was completely destroyed. That couldn’t have been your doing, right?” Jing Mingfeng asked while Bai Yunfei was deep in thought.

“What rubbish, of course it wasn’t me. When I was chased that day, I came across another Soul Ancestor that began to fight with the first. I took the chance to escape then...” Bai Yunfei stated.

“It was that simple?”

“Aye, it was that simple.”

“.....”

Jing Mingfeng grew silent, he knew that it wouldn’t do to ask too many questions. Thinking for a moment, his right hand shook so that several pieces of jewelry appeared. Handing them over to Bai

Yunfei, he said, “Well... I wanted to give these back.”

Surprised, Bai Yunfei’s lips twitched into a smile as he looked at the swollen face of Jing Mingfeng. “Oh? Are you that conscientious to return these to me?”

Jing Mingfeng’s lips twitched in annoyance and his eyes revealed some reluctance. There was hesitation for a moment before finally pushing the accessories into Bai Yunfei’s hand. “Giving me these things helped me escape in one piece, so I owe you yet again. Now that I’m fine, it’s only natural that I return them to you...”

Bai Yunfei smiled and gave a knowing look at him, but he took the accessories anyways.

The two said no more, and the area descended into a momentary silence.

Jing Mingfeng’s eyes stared up at the starry canvas that was the night sky with twinkling eyes. After a moment’s worth of pondering, he looked as if he had finally reached a decision with something.

Half a moment later, a flash of hatred appeared in his eyes before determination replaced it. Biting at his lips, he turned to look at Bai Yunfei.

“Bai Yunfei, I wish to make a deal with you!”

Chapter 112: Disguise Technique

“A deal?” Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows rose with a quirked smile, “What do you mean?”

“I will teach you my family’s secrets in exchange for your accessories that increase speed! However, I don’t want the ones you can give out on a whim. You most likely have even better ones, right? I only want the ones that make me faster!” Jing Mingfeng earnestly spoke.

“Oh? You want accessories that make you even faster?” Bai Yunfei’s smile remained on his face as if he wasn’t shocked at all. “Did you really think I’d trade with you?”

“Give it up! I know you’re interested in my family secrets. I also saw that you don’t see those accessories as anything important, or at least they’re not completely beyond the notion of being exchanged. What say you? Do we have a deal?”

“How about being able to change one’s face and being able to hide one’s soulforce?”

“Go to hell! In your dreams maybe! The Soul Concealment Art is something you should give up on. I wouldn’t even think about handing over to you right now! I’ll only give you the perfect Face Change Technique for four of your super effective accessories. I’ll say it again. They have to increase my speed! If they can’t, then we forget about this deal!”

Bai Yunfei’s smile gradually became smaller as his eyes began to sparkle. After pretending to debate Jing Mingfeng’s words for some time, he finally nodded his head, “Fine. I agree to this deal. However, I’ll have to think of which accessories to give you over the night.”

Jing Mingfeng’s eyes lit up with a flabbergasted expression. “Wha-you can even ‘choose’ which ones!? These stuff are priceless

even in comparison to soul armaments. Do you really have that many? But how... these items are something that even my grandfather only had two of..."

At Jian Mingfeng's slip of tongue, Bai Yunfei felt his heart skip a beat. What Jing Mingfeng had revealed was that there were accessories that could increase the elemental affinity of the wearer!

"There are other accessories that could give a boost to 'elemental affinity'? Ah, well if a soul armament can be reforged to increase strength using a method different than the Upgrade technique but still achieves similar strength, then there would have to be accessories that could increase one's elemental affinity as well... Then that means I shouldn't have been worried about trying to explain the uniqueness of these accessories." Bai Yunfei's head began to spin with thoughts. He couldn't let Jing Mingfeng know what he was thinking; otherwise, it would be hard to explain.

"I've had some fortunate encounters, that's all. The Skysoul Continent has no shortages of those, does it not?" Bai Yunfei smiled. "Many of the accessories I have have negligible effects. However many it takes to trade with you will be however many it takes. That's why I wish to think about it."

Jing Mingfeng stared at him for a moment with a quirked mouth, "Forget it, what do I care what you're thinking about? As long as this deal is fair."

Shaking his right hand, a gray-colored soul skill scroll appeared in his hand. Tossing it to Bai Yunfei, Jing Mingfeng said, "You take it first then. Learn it overnight and give it back tomorrow."

"What? You're just giving it to me like that? Aren't you afraid of me backing out of the deal?" Bai Yunfei took the scroll with a questioning look.

"No matter. If you were to take it and run, then I'll have to admit that I was blind in my judgement. Besides, I owe you still, I'll take it that our debts are even now." Jing Mingfeng waved his hand

before quipping, “Are you going to back out of the deal?”

“Haha, definitely not. I’m still looking forward to trading for the other secrets you have. How could I possibly consider cutting off a future path that I could take?” Bai Yunfei laughed and put away the scroll.

“You’re still on about the Soul Concealment? Forget about it, it’s completely different from the Face Change technique. Although those items of yours are unusual, it’s not worth exchanging for a soul skill at all.” Jing Mingfeng snorted as he shot down Bai Yunfei.

“The Soul Concealment technique is... that important? Well, changing one’s appearance and hiding one’s soul are two different concepts I guess...” Bai Yunfei thought to himself. Looking away to see Tianming waving at them, Bai Yunfei stood up and dusted himself off, “Let’s eat dinner first. We can talk about this tomorrow.”

It was only after watching Bai Yunfei’s back recede into the distance that Jing Mingfeng stopped smiling. Turning to look up at the moon, his eyes glazed over with a vacant light.

“Father, grandfather, I’ve... traded away the Face Change technique. Will you blame me for that? But still, with the clan gone... is there a need to hide them anymore? I only wish for power. I want to become strong. Using our secrets to trade for power... it can’t be helped. I’d rather die than hand them over to our enemies, but Bai Yunfei is different from them. It’ll only be the Face Change technique, that shouldn’t be a problem...”

“Father, mother, grandfather, brother, everyone... wait until I become strong enough. I won’t hide in the shadows like an ostrich in the sand. I vow that there’ll be a day where our debts of blood will be paid for with blood!!”

With thousands of ideas flashing through his mind, Jing Mingfeng could only give one final sigh to calm his nerves.

Replacing the expression on his face with a wretched smile, he began to walk to where the others were gathered...

Although aunty Zhao had not found Jing Mingfeng to be a pleasant addition to the group, she said nothing about the matter. Her guarded nature had only moved on from Bai Yunfei to Jing Mingfeng. Huang Wan was so pleased knowing that Jing Mengfeng was a soul cultivator that he made preparations for him to sleep in a nice tent.

.....

Late that night within a tent, Tianming was blissfully sleeping away the night. On the mat next to him, Bai Yunfei sat with a scroll in his hand and a pondering look on his face.

“The Face Change technique... it allows control over the facial muscles and skeletal structure to change the appearance of the face. By manipulating the entire skeletal structure and muscles in the body, one can change their body shape. By manipulating the throat, one can change their voice... How was someone able to create such a perfect skill like this in the first place? I didn’t even know there was a special way of using the pores of the body like this...”

When a soul cultivator became a Soul Personage, they became adept in the way of controlling the skin and flesh to gain a very preliminary understanding of how to change their appearance. However, this transformation was limited and could not be held for long due to the constant need of vigilance and control. The Face Change technique, however, was a perfect method of transformation. The complexity and peculiarity of the transformation had been so overwhelming that Bai Yunfei felt dizzy just by reading it.

To be brief, Bai Yunfei would be able to change his appearance at will as long as he mastered this soul skill. He wouldn’t need to constantly maintain this transformation either. Even if he died,

the transformation would be maintained. There was also a wide range of functionality within his transformation. Of course, turning into a three or four meter tall giant or a one meter tall dwarf was impossible.

Closing his eyes to ensure that he had properly memorized the contents of the scroll, Bai Yunfei put away the scroll. He steadied his breathing to try as he used the technique on himself.

Several minutes later, the muscles on Bai Yunfei's face began to shake. Slowly, his nose grew larger and his forehead expanded out. His chin grew flat and his face stretched wider just by a little.

Not caring for what he was changing into, Bai Yunfei was merely just trying to test out the most basics of transformation on his face. If any regular civilian were to see his face now, the civilian would swear up and down that he was looking at the face of a demon. Under his careless transformation, Bai Yunfei's face grew grotesque and bizarre.

About an hour later, Bai Yunfei finally stopped the experiments on his face before he calmed down. Then the trembles on his face began to start again, and not even ten minutes later, his face was back to normal.

Opening his eyes, Bai Yunfei felt his face with a curious look, "Mastering the concept is rather easy, but... if I want to change into the face I want, that'll need more practice..."

"Well then. I've gotten enough practice for now..." Bai Yunfei's right hand shook to reveal a white bracelet in his hand. "I'll prepare the stuff to exchange tomorrow. I may have several of these, but not all of them are the same quality..."

"Upgrade..."

Chapter 113: The 'Lawlessness' of Upgrading

When Bai Yunfei had told Jing Mingfeng he wanted a night to think it over, it was actually because he simply didn't have enough accessories to give to him.

There was naturally no way that he could just tell the other person, "I don't have any as of right now, give me a night and I'll have some for you." That was tantamount to telling everyone else that he had a special power, wouldn't it?

'Having treasure' and 'being able to turn things into treasure' are two entirely different concepts. Jing Mingfeng only knew that Bai Yunfei was in possession of several treasures. At most, he would think that Bai Yunfei was lucky enough to stumble on them. There was no telling how he would react if were to learn that these items were made through a special process by Bai Yunfei...

It was extraordinarily hard to understand the human mind. Although Bai Yunfei had no doubts of Jing Mingfeng's character and how good of a person he might be morally, the relationship between Bai Yunfei and him was not as good as Li Chengfeng or Hong Yin.

Also, Jing Mingfeng only wanted the items that could increase his speed, so Bai Yunfei would focus entirely on that attribute. Before he left Yanlin City, he had managed to buy several accessories. He just hadn't found the chance to upgrade them just yet. As long as he could, he would be able to ascertain the attribute of the items after a single upgrade. Then by focusing on the attribute, he could upgrade them by using his remaining amount of soulpoints. Through this process, he was able to get thirty or forty accessories that added to agility.

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +55 Agility

+10 Additional Effect: Another 125 of agility is added.

Upgrade Requirement: 29 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei looked at the white ring in his hand for a moment before returning it to his space ring. “This is the only +10 accessory I have that offers agility. There’s still three left, I have to upgrade them tonight...”

“Did I bet away my luck or something!” At a loss for words, Bai Yunfei slapped his own forehead. “Is there really no way to improve the chances of a successful upgrade? Is it all ‘luck’? Why can’t you just give me an item that improves ‘luck’ then!”

Grumbling to himself, Bai Yunfei started to pray for even better luck. With another shake of his hand, he began to upgrade again.

.....

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +56 Agility

+10 Additional Effect: Movement speed is increased by 4%.

Upgrade Requirement: 30 Soulpoints

“Phew...” Bai Yunfei let out a sigh in relief. “After exploding five items, I finally have another +10 item!

“But... there’s only just the ring. That makes two then. I’ll hold off on upgrading the rings for now...” Bai Yunfei put away the ring and took out a dark-amethyst bracelet.

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +9

Additional Attribute: +43 Agility

Upgrade Requirement: 22 Soulpoints

This was an accessory he had upgraded from before. Giving it some thought, Bai Yunfei shrugged, “Upgrade.”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +59 Agility

+10 Additional Effect: Increase hand speed by 5%

Upgrade Requirement: 30 Soulpoints

“It finally succeeded!” Bai Yunfei whooped.

He was secretly rejoicing that he did not decide to “slow down a bit” and upgrade a lower level item that could very well fail to succeed.

In the past when he tried to experiment and research the “rule” of the Upgrade technique, he had failed to upgrade several +8 items. After six attempts, he managed to destroy two +8 equipment in the process of upgrading them to +9. And then nine +9 items failed to upgrade to +10 after... in short. He had tried many different “experiments” to decipher the secret of increasing his chances of a successful upgrade.

In the end, there had been one conclusion — there was no goddamn use. If it succeeded, it succeeded. Sometimes, he would have seven or eight successes in a row. Other times, he’d have

nothing left. Though, every single time he thought back to that brick of his, he would gnash his teeth and never had the urge to fully upgrade something until it exploded. He would experiment with the more common equipment, and although the amount of explosions would cause him to feel ready to puke blood, he at least never regretted his choices...

“Increase hand speed by 5%?” Bai Yunfei was confused. This was the very first time he came across such an effect, “What does this mean? Hand speed? The ‘slight of hand’, is that it?

“Let’s try it...” After a period of thought, he simply equipped the amethyst bracelet.

Like before, there was that same strange but familiar energy that entered his body. It was the phenomenon that would arise every time he equipped an upgraded item. Closing his eyes to take in the effects, moments passed before his eyes reopened. Then, with a speed like lightning, his hand lashed out in a blurry shadow in front of his body,

Bai Yunfei halted dead in his tracks after seeing that. Flabbergasted, he muttered, “It’s not too far away from attack speed, but there is a slight difference; it is concentrated into the aspect of the “hand”, so the effects are even better!”

“But the most important thing is...” Bai Yunfei fished out the rings from his space belt with a pleased smile, “I bet Jing Mingfeng will be happy to have these. His skills are associated with his hands. I wonder why he has such a ‘peculiar hobby’... Hm, maybe his secretive skill of pickpocketing someone is also a soul technique?”

Taking out a necklace, Bai Yunfei relaxed a little, “I didn’t think I’d get to my last +10 item so fast, there shouldn’t be any other problems, so I should be able to upgrade the other accessories...

“Upgrade....”

.....

Roughly three hours away from daylight or so.

Bai Yunfei looked at two black rings in his hands with a hesitant look.

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +9

Additional Attribute: +46 Spirit

Upgrade Requirement: 23 Soulpoints

In his right hand was the very same space ring that Hong Yin had given him. In his left hand, his older space ring could be seen. In comparison, the newer space ring was capable of holding more than the older.

Both rings were originally +8. But for some strange reason, Bai Yunfei had felt that his ‘luck’ was rather good tonight, and decided that exploding one of the rings wouldn’t really matter. Therefore, upgraded them both, but he did not expect them to both succeed their upgrade. Now he was stuck in a conundrum on whether he should continue or not.

One thing worth mentioning was that the space ring Hong Yin had given was the very same ring with the very rare ‘spirit’ attribute. Spirit meaning soulforce of course...

“Spirit, that increases my soulforce... although it’s a rather insignificant amount, it could still save a soul cultivators life in a pinch potentially... With the information I learned yesterday, the additional effects something gains after an upgrade level of +10 corresponds with the attribute of the item. Agility means it’ll have a bonus increase with speed. Strength basically means to have to do with the body as a whole. The spirit attribute is extremely rare; even though it’s not yet +10, I can bet that its effects after +10 will

benefit soulforce..."

"Forget it, time to gamble! This was an unexpected outcome anyways. Exploding it just means that was it!" After a moment of hesitation, Bai Yunfei decided to throw caution to the wind. His determination grew.

"Upgrade!"

Chapter 114: Spirit Recovery

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +65 Spirit

+10 Additional Effect: Spirit recovery increased by 3%

Upgrade Requirement: 31 Soulpoints

“Success!!” Bai Yunfei felt elation in his heart as he breathed in and out to calm himself. “An increase in spirit recovery! That means... I can recover my soulforce even faster!?”

Bai Yunfei impatiently put the ring on while his eyes beamed with light. Closing his eyes, he began to take in the sensation of his soulforce being recovered.

Ten minutes or so later, Bai Yunfei’s eyes opened up with a pleased smile. Nodding to himself, he said, “What a lucky night this has been! An additional effect like this is just too great!

“Then, should I upgrade this other space ring?” After calming down, Bai Yunfei looked at the ring on his left hand with hesitation.

“Forget it, even I know when to stop. Even at +10, it’ll be similar to the other ‘Superior’ space rings. Having an extra space ring is useful anyhow.” Bai Yunfei immediately gave up the notion of upgrading it a moment later.

After that, he slowly began to tidy everything. Then one item at a time, he stored them all in the newly upgraded +10 space ring. Hong Yin had told him that if a space ring was destroyed, then the spatial structure of the ring would collapse in on itself and all of

the items inside would be thrown out. He didn't wish for the tent to be flooded with equipment in the case that he failed, so he had taken them out before upgrading.

The Fire-tipped Spear was placed in the space ring on his right hand so that it would be easy to access in a fight. The Glacial Pricker was there as well. Putting it there was convenient. Even though putting a space ring on both hands was simply a superficial show, Bai Yunfei didn't really care to think about that. The space ring on his left hand primarily held his many pieces of equipment. His flying daggers were specifically stored in that ring. He wouldn't have to swap the Fire-tipped Spear in his right hand to his left in order to take out the daggers in battle if they were in the space ring on his left hand.

"Then that'll be all for now. I've accomplished my goal and unexpectedly profited as well. This night can be said to be my most profitable night yet..." Bai Yunfei sighed in relief. It was almost day time by now and his soulforce consumption had been rather large. There was no need to continue upgrading, so he laid his head onto his pillow and closed his eyes. Bai Yunfei began to sleep, slowly recovering his soulforce...

.....

Early morning when Bai Yunfei walked out of his tent, he saw that everyone was already up. The day was already in full swing. By the fire nearby, plenty of people could be seen hurrying about their own respective tasks such as preparing breakfast or inspecting the goods.

Not too far away, Tang Xinyun could be seen sitting on a rock and observing the others do their tasks. Sometimes, she would look to her left with a smile at the inseparable aunty Zhao who was still guarding her. The only difference was that there was yet another gray-robed twenty or so year old youth about 1.7 meters tall. His hair was tied behind his head to reveal a rather ordinary face. At the current moment, he was speaking flattering words to

the aunty.

Bai Yunfei was shocked — this person was Jing Mingfeng.

His beaten up face had completely healed, but seeing how the aunt didn't inquire anything about it, it seemed that he had done something in order to appease her. However, this appearance of his was completely different from when Bai Yunfei saw him last. Clearly he had changed into another face that was better 'suited' for the situation.

At that moment, Jing Mingfeng had noticed Bai Yunfei. Smiling apologetically to the aunty, he gave a few words before running off to Bai Yunfei with a trail of dust rising behind him. A smile of expectation could be seen on his face.

"So, where are my items?" He asked in a rush before he could even get close.

Bai Yunfei looked around before giving him a meaningful look to walk off to the side.

Walking to a nearby clearing a hundred meters away, Bai Yunfei turned around to stare at the confused Jing Mingfeng, "Is this really your true face?" He asked.

"Eh?" Jing Mingfeng was confused for a moment before smiling with a puffed-up chest. "Hehe, what do you think?"

Bai Yunfei quirked his lips without asking anymore. With a shake of his right hand, he took out a gray scroll and threw it to Jing Mingfeng.

Catching the scroll, Jing Mingfeng gave it a quick look-over, and then stashed it away into his space ring. With an impatient look, he asked, "What about my stuff?"

"I've changed my mind, I don't want to trade anymore." Bai Yunfei declared.

"You!" Jing Mingfeng was dumbfounded and lost spirit for a

moment. However, when he saw Bai Yunfei's teasing look, he snapped back to attention. He said, "Oy, you're joking with me!"

"Haha, I was only joking and wanted to see your reaction." Bai Yunfei smirked before throwing over several accessories. "One ring to a hand, don't wear them on the same one!"

Aside from the two rings and the bracelet, there was also a jadeite sword pendant whose additional effect was also an increase in speed.

Staring brightly at the four items he had received, Jing Mingfeng quickly put them on. Closing his eyes to feel the power within, he then opened them with a smile on his face. As if he was unsatisfied, his body blurred into motion as he began to run around.

His speed was so great that any regular person would have only seen a blurry shadow. Running in several circles, he finally ran back to where Bai Yunfei was.

"Haha!! Great! I can feel that my speed is a third faster than what it was before! If I can adapt to this, then I'll be even faster!" Jing Mingfeng came to a stop right next to Bai Yunfei with a pleased-as-punch smile on his face. He suddenly gave a strange yelp. He had been preparing to reach out to slap Bai Yunfei on the shoulder, but he felt something different the moment his arm flew out. Quickly bringing back his arm, Jing Mingfeng stared at it in dead shock.

"This is..." Jing Mingfeng gave a curious glance at the bracelet on his arm. Then, he glanced to Bai Yunfei with a hesitant look.

Bai Yunfei smiled and nodded, "The bracelet increases your hand speed."

The light in Jing Mingfeng's eyes grew even brighter as he waved his hand side to side in a series of complicated movements. No longer doubting what Bai Yunfei had said, he stared admirably at the bracelet on his hand with joy.

"Brother Bai, Brother Jing, food's ready! We'll be leaving

afterward!"

Tianming called out while waving to Bai Yunfei and then shouting out a word of greeting to Jing Mingfeng before walking back. Jing Mingfeng couldn't help but continue to swing his right hand. He watched it move as he walked back with Bai Yunfei to eat breakfast.

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"Jing Mingfeng, what do you plan on doing now?" While Bai Yunfei was pouring some congee into his bowl, he asked Jing Mingfeng about his future plans.

"Ah?" Jing Mingfeng didn't know how to reply for a moment before realizing the question, "Oh, what do I plan to do now? I don't really have anywhere to go, so I'll go wherever I want I suppose. Where do you plan on going?"

"Everyone here is traveling to Guyi City. Miss Xinyun and Aunty Zhao will be hiring a carriage to hurry on from there. Brother Bai and I will continue to travel to my home in Gaoyi City." Tianming cheerfully answered.

"I see, then... since I have nothing to do, I might as well go with you to Gaoyi City and see the sights." Jing Mingfeng answered after some thought.

"That's fine with me! When we get to my home, I'll definitely warmly receive brothers Bai and Jing into it. There's plenty of fun things to do in Gaoyi City as well." Tianming laughed as he responded.

"....."

Bai Yunfei had remained silent as he observed the 'mutual understanding' of each other with a strange eye, "Since when did these two get so close?"

Chapter 115: The Consequences of Not Filling A Hole After Digging It

Continuing their journey, Bai Yunfei was startled to realize that the relationship between Jing Mingfeng and Tianming was growing at an astonishingly freakish rate.

It had only taken them a single morning before the two could be practically seen with their arms over the other's shoulder by noon. It was like they were now blood brothers. By late afternoon, the two of them were already detached from the group and were gesturing to each other as they excitedly talked.

When night fell, everyone garrisoned themselves by a quain hillside where Huang Wan began to direct people to set up the tents and have some people prepare dinner.

Tang Xinyun had set off to enjoy the landscape because she was interested in the setting sun. She wanted to get there before the sun could completely set behind the hills. Zhao Mancha followed obediently behind her. Jing Mingfeng and Tianming had run off into the nearby forest and out of sight with nothing but laughter to be heard. Completely bored out of his mind, Bai Yunfei could only sit on a nearby rock, and begin to upgrade the remaining few daggers he had.

.....

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

Shaking away the pile of dust in his hands, Bai Yunfei shook his head in disappointment. "Another failure, did I use up all my luck

from last night?" He sighed.

A brown chain bracelet appeared in his hands next. With a cursory glance over it, he focused. "Upgrade."

Upgrade Success

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +51 Strength

+10 Additional Effect: The arm attacking with this item in hand has a 1% chance to double in power.

Upgrade Requirement: 28 Soulpoints

Happy at first, Bai Yunfei looked over the additional effects of the item before disappointment appeared on his face. "While doubling the strength isn't bad, it's limiting and pretty unlikely to activate..."

After one becomes a Soul Sprite, a battle essentially became a battle between one's elemental attribute. The stronger one was the stronger the element would be; thus, the farther away each combatant would be. At this level of strength, very few people would engage in close combat. Even the battle between Jiang Fan and the other man had been several hundred meters apart, but the battle had still been exhilarating and intense. Of course, there were a few soul cultivators who loved to fight up close because of their particular soul skills, but they were only a small minority of soul cultivators. Even if one side was willing, the other side would most likely prefer to stay far away from the other. For that very reason, the additional effect of this accessory was practically useless. The Bai Yunfei of today would have no use for it either. A 1% chance was pitiful. Unless one was lucky enough, there was no way the

enemy would allow one to strike them a hundred times in the course of battle...

“Eh? Isn’t that... Tianming?” As soon as he put away the bracelet, Bai Yunfei could see a secretive figure hiding under the guise of the night as he stalked toward the tents. The average person wouldn’t be able notice him, but Bai Yunfei’s could clearly tell that it was Tianming.

Tianming was like a cat in his slow movements. The area around his chest was bulging slightly as if something was hidden underneath. Then, looking around, he disappeared into the tent with a swish.

Roughly ten minutes later, the flap opened for Tianming to sneak out from it. Pulling at the flap, he made sure that the flap looked as if nothing had changed.

“I say, Tianming, what in the world are you doing?”

Whirling around, the previous look of ‘success’ on Tianming’s face had quickly turned into a look of surprise. Subconsciously leaping a meter into the air from fright, he nearly fell back to the ground in a crumpled mess.

“Bro... brother Bai, what are you doing here?” Tianming asked uneasily before looking to the suspicious Bai Yunfei and then around himself.

“Shouldn’t I be asking you that? What are you being so secretive for?”

“No-nothing... I was uh, making the beds! Yea! I was helping to tidy up the bedding and such. You know that’s what I do around here.” Tianming’s eyes whirled around as he tried to make an excuse.

“Oh, I see...” Bai Yunfei looked at Tianming. Realizing that there was nothing strange about his body now, Bai Yunfei shook his head, “Then why are you acting as if you did something bad if it’s

just that?"

"Ah? Re-really now? Maybe the lighting is bad, you must be mistaken brother Bai. Well-l-l, no more, I have the other beds to clean up now, see you!" Looking left then looking right, he spoke a single phrase and immediately ran off toward the other tents.

"Oh..." Bai Yunfei shook his head before walking back to where Huang Wan and the others were roasting a rabbit. Coming to a stop just ten meters, Bai Yunfei looked back to the tent Tianming had walked out from.

"Isn't that the tent of miss Tang and Aunty Zhao? It seems that they've been targeting her all this time..."

.....

During dinner that evening, Bai Yunfei sat next to two pig-faced men — oh, it was Jing Mingfeng and Tianming.

Who had beaten them? Aunty Zhao of course. Originally they had planned on having the woman go to sleep with a bunch of scorpions crawling all around her bed at night. With the scorpions crawling here and there, it would serve as a mischievous prank...

Unfortunately for them, aunty Zhao had returned to her tent first before dinner and was enlightened of their conspiracy.

The reason was that in his rush to dig the hole for the scorpions to be in, Tianming had forgotten to fill the hole back up...

After a speedy interrogation, the two men were beaten to an inch of their life.

This was the very consequence of not filling the hole one just dug up...

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Watching the two bruised men drink their congee with lips so numb that the congee leaked out without their notice, Bai Yunfei tried hard to suppress the smile on his lips. They were glaring at

the aunty, who pretended as if nothing had happened. Tang Xinyun was eating her meal with smile while Bai Yunfei shook his head without a word. Jing Mingfeng's heart was filled with a mischievous desire for revenge, but that much was to be expected. What Bai Yunfei couldn't understand was why Tianming joined in on this prank? Just what 'incentive' did Jing Mingfeng offer Tianming in order to gain his ardent support. Even more curious, why wasn't Tianming at all angry at Jing Mingfeng for this result?

As if sensing his gaze, Tang Xinyun shifted her head to smile in greeting. Her smile revealed the dimples on her face, prompting Bai Yunfei to return a smile. When aunty Zhao's vigilant gaze swung toward him, Bai Yunfei swung his head away in a hurry. Giving a short cough, his eyes looked down at his congee bowl as if to say, "I have nothing to do with those two; their prank has nothing to do with me..."

Later that night, the two pig-headed men raised the issue of wanting to share the same tent, and relocated Bai Yunfei to another. This truly made Bai Yunfei feel astonished — was this the brotherly camaraderie born from hardships and tribulations?

.....

On the second day, the completely unscratched faces of Jing Mingfeng and Tianming came to aunty Zhao with smiles on their faces to apologize. Annoying her until she finally gave in and forgave them, the two gave a curt bow of their heads, and scampered off yelling words that only they understood. From time to time, Jing Mingfeng's hand could be seen gesticulating while Tianming's eyes flooded with a spark of light as he nodded furiously...

With a helpless sigh, Bai Yunfei looked away and muttered to himself, "He was such a nice child, but he was led astray so quickly..."

The closer and closer they got to Guyi City, the more and more

people they saw on the roads. There were even some teahouses to be seen every so often. For lunch everyone gathered at a nearby inn to eat a meal before continuing on their way.

Approximately two or three in the afternoon, Bai Yunfei could be seen inquiring to Huang Wan of the nature of Guyi City. All of a sudden, Tianming's voice could be heard from behind.

"Brother Bai, brother Bai! Come quick, I have something to tell you..." Tianming waved his hand at Bai Yunfei.

"Oh? What is it?" Bai Yunfei walked over to ask.

"Hehe, I've a secret to tell you..." Tianming gave a surreptitious look left and right before stepping closer to him. Covering his mouth with his left hand, he leaned in to whisper into Bai Yunfei's ear, "I've realized that sis Xinyun has been paying attention to you recently!"

"Eh?" Distracted, Bai Yunfei twisted his head to look at Tang Xinyun, who was in front of him. Bai Yunfei quickly brought his right hand down to grab the hand that was inching toward the piece of jade around his other arm with a terrifying glint.

Narrowing his eyes to glare at the mortified but embarrassed face of Tianming, he said, "Tianming, is this what you've been learning by messing around with Jing Mingfeng for the last two days!?"

"Oh uh... it was just a joke. A joke, that's all! Brother Bai, we were just messing around..."

Taking back his hand with an embarrassed smile, Tianming tried to pass off a covert look and nod to the faraway, hidden figure of Jing Mingfeng. "Bro Bai, don't be mad. I was only just joking around. Don't worry, I'd never do anything bad..."

"Oh..." With such a seemingly honest answer, Bai Yunfei didn't really know how to respond. Deciding on giving a glare to Jing Mingfeng, it was then that Bai Yunfei realized something was about to happen. He swore before looking into the nearby forest to

his right.

At the same time, Bai Yunfei's actions had caught the attention of aunty Zhao and Jing Mingfeng both. Tang Xinyun had been slow on the uptake, but when she saw his movements, she too realized the abnormality of the situation and turned to look where Bai Yunfei was staring.

“Chirppp!!”

The chirping sounds of a bird could be heard from the depths of the forest. Mournful in its sound, the whistle carried far, and soon a flock of birds flew out in every direction...

Chapter 116: Quickshade Bird

“Chirp!!”

The chirping sounds of a bird could be heard from the depths of the forest. Mournful in its sound, the whistle carried far, and a flock of birds flew out in every direction...

The mournful sounds of the birds could be heard, and Bai Yunfei could also distinctly feel the clash of soulforce erupting from the same direction as well.

“Two Soul Sprites and multiple Soul Warriors!” Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows rose up in shock. Just why were there so many soul cultivators in a place like this?

The horses had halted because of the bizarre atmosphere coming from the forest. They began to neigh and stamp their hooves. It took the riders several moments before they could finally placate them, but there was still no way to move them after that.

“Brother Bai, what’s... what’s going on?” Seeing the strange look on everyone’s face, Huang Wan asked him with worry.

“Soul cultivators... and a lot of them.” Bai Yunfei looked to him with confusion. “But it’s what they’re fighting that’s really strange...”

When he heard that soul cultivators were battling, Huang Wan’s face grew anxious. “Ah? Then, then shouldn’t we hurry up and leave just in case we get involved?”

“Yes, that works. At the very least, we won’t invite any trouble...” Bai Yunfei nodded.

“Ai, no no!” Just at that moment, Jing Mingfeng’s voice could be heard as he stared back at Bai Yunfei with an interested look. “What are you trying to suggest here? How could we miss this chance!? At the very least we should go and take a peek, shouldn’t we?”

“Do you even know what’s going on over there?” Bai Yunfei asked in confusion.

“It’s because I don’t know, that’s why I’m curious!” Jing Mingfeng laughed. “I love to watch things from the sidelines. If we’re only just taking a look, we can leave anytime afterward.”

“You say it as if it’s that easy...” Bai Yunfei was speechless, but he could acknowledge that Jing Mingfeng possessed the skills to do as he wanted. If he wanted to spy on something without anyone noticing, then his ability to disguise himself was more than enough to do so. Unless the other side was too strong, then coming and going would be easy.

“That’s right, why don’t we take a look? We’ve so many experts here, so we’ll be fine even if there is trouble. We’re only taking a look, so it shouldn’t be a problem.” Tianming’s eyes lit up as he stood by Bai Yunfei’s side. He was even more excited than Jing Mingfeng, and he craned his neck so that he could look into the forest.

“Well...” Bai Yunfei was still hesitant after looking at these two. In truth, he too was quite curious about what was happening. He paid particular attention to the first bird cry...

“Aunty Zhao, we should take a look. That bird’s chirp just now was rather worrisome...” In Bai Yunfei’s moment of hesitation, Tang Xinyun spoke for him.

With narrowed eyes, the older woman debated the decision for a moment before finally nodding. “We’ll watch from afar. If possible, we shouldn’t meddle in their affairs...”

“Yes.” Tang Xinyun replied before turning to look at Bai Yunfei.

“Fine fine. We’ll go take a look, but look only, that’s all!” Bai Yunfei gave a helpless nod of his head. He reassured Huang Wan that they would be back in a short moment, and requested the group to take a short break for now. Jing Mingfeng and Tianming

were both on the verge of rocketing away to the site, but they waited for the other soul cultivators before they swiftly traveled to the area of interest.

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Running for another seven or eight thousand meters, the group finally felt a rather strong concentration of energy running rampant with soulforce in the air. Coming to a stop so that they could suppress their soulforce. Jing Mingfeng used his soul skill to fully extinguish his presence as he took the lead. Bai Yunfei had almost no way to detect his existence, a feat that made him feel rather envious of Jing Mingfeng. Right behind the two was aunty Zhao and Tang Xinyun who were both looking at the back of Jing Mingfeng in awe.

Tianming's presence was extremely faint since his strength was only at the Soul Personage level. With the chaotic nature of the soulforce in front of them, no one would be able to detect them unless they were concentrating hard on soulsensing.

Up at the very front, Jing Mingfeng suddenly stopped moving. He waved his hand to stop the others before silently hiding behind a bush.

Walking to his side, Bai Yunfei peeked through the leaves to check on the situation.

Roughly a hundred meters ahead, there was a rather small lake where nine figures could be seen in a ring formation. Everyone's eyes were faced toward the center of the circle at a spot ten meters in the air.

There were two azure-colored birds that were currently entangled with each other. Another golden eagle could be seen. There was a single bird that was trying to escape, but it would be immediately blocked and forced back 'into the ring' each time.

At a closer look, this one bird was completely white in color, but

the azure light around it had made it seem azure in color. The abdomen and feathers of the bird were spotlessly white in color, but there were specks of blood that dyed its feathers. Its wings were spread wide. It's two-thirds of a meter wingspan was rather disorganized in its flapping motion — it was injured on its left side.

Despite its injuries, the white-colored bird had no intention of giving up. With a low chirp that made it sound angry, the wind around its body flew out with a flap of its wings, and flew down in the form of a blade of wind.

The other bird fighting was a gray-colored bird that was also of the wind affinity. Flying around the gust of wind without trouble, it let out a gust of wind as well. There were no visible wounds on its body, making its strength on the same level of that as the other bird. However, its speed was slightly slower than the other bird. Even with its injuries, the white bird was still flying faster than it. The giant eagle flying overhead was staring voraciously down below and cut off any escape route for the bird. From the looks of things, the bird would not be able to continue putting off its future any longer.

Occasionally the blades of wind would be dodged by the people around the bird. Only a tall man and a short man stood steadfast without moving as they stared up at the sky. Their soulforce filled the air as if trying to manipulate something. Whenever a strike came at them, they would swipe their hands and an azure or a golden ray of energy would come forward to neutralize the wind.

From the looks of things, the entire crowd here was after that white-colored bird. Aside from the leading two figures, everyone else carried nets and ropes, meant for capturing animals, in their hands. They were clearly waiting for an opportunity to capture the bird.

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"Are they trying to capture a soulbeast? There's so many people

here! Two Soul Sprites, three Soul Warriors, and four Soul Personages... They're clearly not trying to kill the bird. They are trying their best to capture it..." Bai Yunfei had never seen a soulbeast fight before, let alone three of them. There was a strange glint in his eyes as he remarked, "That bird, it seems..."

"Aunty Zhao, it's a quickshade bird!" At that moment, Tang Xinyun let out a low sound of surprise. Bai Yunfei turned to look at her only to notice the worry and anxious look in her eyes.

"Yes, it's that same quickshade bird. I didn't think there would be one here, or that so many people would be gathered to capture it..." Aunty Zhao's eyebrows furrowed together to look at the bird.

Listening to the two, Bai Yunfei asked in surprise, "Eh? Miss Tang, have you seen this white bird before?"

Chapter 117: Release That Bird!

Listening to the two, Bai Yunfei asked in surprise, “Eh? Miss Tang, have you seen this white bird before?”

Nodding, aunty Zhao replied, “Several days ago we came across it. It was injured in a forest, and the young miss used some of her soulforce to treat its wounds so that it could fly. But it’s a soulbeast that doesn’t like coming into contact with humans.”

“It’s one of the fastest bird type soulbeasts due to its inherent wind affinity. At full speed, it travels so fast that it leaves behind a mirror image. That’s why it’s known as the ‘quickshade bird,’ and it is considered one of the favorite types of soulbeasts for a soul cultivator to have. This particular quickshade bird is only at the beginning of the fifth level. That’s roughly the equivalent of a Soul Ancestor, but with the wounds it has, its strength is now low enough to be trapped by these two fourth level birds... I bet the wounds it had experienced earlier were from these people. It was able to escape before, but, in the end, it seems it was unable to get away from them...”

“Chirp!!”

At that moment, another loud chirp could be heard. It interrupted aunty Zhao and caused Tang Xinyun to give a small gasp. Turning his head, Bai Yunfei saw the quickshade bird barely dodge the claw of the golden eagle before being slammed with a gust of wind by the other gray bird. It haphazardly dodged to the side, but the bird’s injured wing forced the bird off balance, causing it to spiral to the ground.

At the same time, the taller soul cultivator whistled, signaling everyone to throw their nets out all at once.

During this crucial moment, the quickshade bird gave a shrill chirp. It tilted its wings, moving nearly a meter to the side to dodge the net.

“Hmph!” The taller soul cultivator snorted. There was a flash in his eyes as if he had finally caught the opportunity he had been waiting for. With a wave of his right hand, a golden beam shot forth toward the quickshade bird. Flashing forward several dozen meters, the light then coiled around one of the claws of the bird!

It was a golden rope about the same size of a bamboo shoot! This golden rope appeared out of nowhere, catching the quickshade bird. It could not escape; this rope had to be a soul armament.

.....

The moment the quickshade bird was captured, Tang Xinyun’s foot pressed deeply into the ground. It was as if she was preparing to charge off after the bird.

“Young miss, you can’t!” Aunty Zhao grabbed hold of her arm with narrowed eyes, “There’s far too many people over there. You can’t just recklessly charge in and make enemies of all of them for the sake of a mere soulbeast.”

“But...” Tang Xinyun looked to the terrified quickshade bird with despair. “Aunty, I wish to save it. Look how pitiful it is and how desperate it is while trying to get free. Look at them, you can clearly see that they’re bad guys. There’s no doubt they’ll torment it...”

“I agree. I can practically hear the dismal cries of the bird as if it were a human... Brother Bai, can you save it?” Tianming asked from the side as he stared at the pitiful quickshade bird.

Bai Yunfei’s eyes turned to glance at Jing Mingfeng who in turn shrugged his shoulders. “You decide. I believe that even if we were to fight them, driving them back wouldn’t be too hard.”

There was still hesitation in Bai Yunfei’s mind. He had already ascertained that this quickshade bird had been the very same ‘destined travelers in arms’ he had encountered before. It was when a bird had flown by above him. More importantly, it was

because of Hong Yin that he felt some affection toward soulbeasts. As the quickshade bird desperately tried to flee from the human's grasp, Bai Yunfei felt his desire to save the bird grow stronger than ever.

However, the amount of people here was a problem. Each one of person was strong, and with all of them here for the express purpose of trying to capture the soulbeast, someone had to have hired them all to capture it. In that case, if Bai Yunfei and the others were to interfere, they would be risking offending an extremely large power...

While Bai Yunfei was hesitating, the situation in front of them had grown even worse. The bird had continued to struggle as it tried to shake off the golden rope, but to no avail. Its wings flapped wildly in order to take flight. The rope was now tied around its wings causing the wound on the bird's wing to open and shoot forth even more blood. Despite its injuries, the bird was still desperately trying to take off into the sky.

The bird had just so happen to look in the direction of Bai Yunfei. From his hiding spot, Bai Yunfei could clearly see rage and unwillingness in the bird's eyes.

The gray bird and golden eagle had already flown down to deliver the final grace when the quickshade bird let out a loud chirp that was filled with desperation. A rich amount of wind began to course through its wings before transforming into a small hurricane that forced back the two birds. After that, the hurricane dissipated back into the bird's wings. No matter how much it tried to flap its wings, the bird could not do anything more...

"Hmph, the finale death throes! Don't let it waste its energy and kill itself!" When the taller soul cultivator saw the golden rope grow even more taut with the amount of force the bird was exerting, he began to try his best to restrain the bird's movements. With another command, he and the shorter soul cultivator gave a nod and brought out their left hands.

A single multicolored snake shot forth from the robes of the taller soul cultivator. With eyes crimson-red, the snake spat out a glob of venom that was multicolored, and caused many of the nearby people to shudder in fright. Clearly this venom was very poisonous.

Coiling in mid-air, the snake wrapped around the golden rope, and began to travel along the rope at a rapid pace.

The moment the snake was traveling up the rope, the shorter cultivator had a gray shadow dart out from his own robes. A single small bat of a gray color had appeared with a shrill shriek that accompanied the flapping of its wings. It shot toward the quickshade bird!

.....

When the two soul cultivators had lifted their arms to command their soulbeasts, Bai Yunfei's pupil dilated as he gasped to himself, "The Beast Taming School!!"

It had been very apparent to see that the two soulbeasts had emerged from space rings! The only ones capable of such a thing were those from the Beast Taming School! Now all of the pieces of the puzzle were on the table. The two soulbeasts that had been attacking the quickshade bird were clearly more soulbeasts under the control of these two. That was why they had been rather stiff and leaked some soulforce earlier.

Bai Yunfei's eyes narrowed in resolution. "We'll save it! No matter what happens, do not let them find out our identities! Only Jing Mingfeng and I will head out. Aunty Zhao, look after miss Tang and Tianming. Unless you can help it, do not reveal yourselves!"

In the middle of his command, Bai Yunfei's face had begun to twitch and spasm. By the time he finished speaking, Bai Yunfei had already assumed a different physical appearance. His body was only several inches taller and his ability to change his face was not

at all perfect, so the look of his face now was quite strange to look at it. No matter who saw this face, all they would see would be a face that didn't quite match the features on it. Now was not the time for Bai Yunfei to worry about his technique; the most important thing right now was to make sure his original appearance would not be seen.

Understanding the intentions of Bai Yunfei straight away, Jing Mingfeng's movements had been even swifter than Bai Yunfei. His face completely changed with a wave of his right hand over his face. It was like he was conducting a magic trick.

Within several seconds, the preparations of the two had finished. With a nod of their head toward each other, they charged forward without hesitation.

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The speed of both bat and snake had been tremendously fast. In the span of several seconds they had already reached the quickshade bird. Striking the hurricane around the injured bird, a hiss and a shriek were heard as the two were flung back. However, the damage had been done, the hurricane had been dissolved, revealing the quickshade bird within.

The two soul cultivators stared fixedly at the injured bird with their soulforce fluctuating wildly. Straight away, the two soulbeasts followed their owners command and flew straight at the quickshade bird!

A shrill chirp made its way into the air as the quickshade bird revealed a glint of despair in its eyes. Its bloodstained wings began to slow down as if it resigned itself to its fate...

“Whooooosh!”

When the soulbeasts were just several meters away from the quickshade bird, four different ear-piercing sounds could be heard followed by four different glints of metal flying at the four

soulbeasts!

“Ding ding!” Two separate clinks could be heard as a single dagger struck the snake coiled around the golden rope. There was a spark as the blade collided with the snake, but other than a faint white mark on the scales of the snake, there was no visible damage. However, the grip the snake had on the rope had slackened enough for it to fall from it. The other sound had come from the golden eagle being struck in the abdomen. In a flurry of golden feathers and another burst of sparks, the eagle had emerged unharmed as well, but it had been hindered in its flight.

As the lightest of the four, the gray bird had let out a small chirp and tilted to the side in order to dodge the incoming dagger. However, the bat had suffered disastrously in comparison to the eagle. Its right wing had been completely pierced through. With such an infliction, the bat had been knocked unbalanced and fell to the ground.

The incoming two figures had already been spotted by the entire crowd. One of them shouted out loud,

“Oy! Bastards! Release that bird!!”

Chapter 118: Taking Care of the "Small Fry"

The sudden and unexpected development surprised the group from the Beast Taming School. Some of them were stupefied to see the rapid arrival of both Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng.

The taller Soul Sprite was the first to react. In befuddlement, he did not approach to stop the two; instead, ye shouted, “What are you spacing out for? Stop them!”

Halfway through his speech, Jing Mingfeng’s and Bai Yunfei’s right hands moved quickly, launching objects from them. By the time the man finished speaking, the daggers that had been thrown were already on a direct collision course with the rope he was holding in his right hand!

Once again shocked, he hurriedly moved his hand aside. However, he did not move his hand away fast enough since it was being subjected to a great amount of force. Thus, a bloody gash could be seen forming on his wrist as blood began to flow out from the deep wounds.

“That’s... a soul armament!!” The man cried out in despondency. He had felt extremely confident in the defensive ability of the golden aura around him, but it had been easily cut apart by that weapon. Only a soul armament could accomplish such a feat. Were these people using a soul armament merely as a projectile to throw!?

The shock on his face had not even left his face when something else caused him to cry out once more, “No!”

During the time he had tried the dodge the dagger and was injured by it, the slackened rope had given just enough leeway for the captured bird to escape. With a mighty flap of its right wing, the bird managed to fly back into the air. With its legs escaping the confinements of the rope, the bird was able to let out a weakened chirp. Then with a bit of soulforce, it flew further away. The speed

of the quickshade bird was rather slow because of the injuries it had sustained. On the verge of collapse, it finally managed to regain some energy as it flew several hundred meters into the forest.

As the bird flew away, Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng had already approached the other soul cultivators. Jing Mingfeng was positioned in front of two Soul Personage while Bai Yunfei was side by side a Soul Warrior and Soul Personage.

Despite the time it took to narrate this sequence of events, they had happened in a relatively short amount of time. Before the weaker ones could even react and turn to two to fight them, Bai Yunfei and and Jing Minfeng were already there.

“Smallfry shouldn’t be getting in the way!” Jing Mingfeng was exuberantly fast and forced the two Soul Personages back half a step before grabbing them both by their faces. His muscles began to bulge, and with two grunts, he immediately smashed their heads into the ground, knocking them out...

Bai Yunfei had not been any slower, and threw a dagger from his hand. His feet moved furiously as he charged at a Soul Personage. With a fist to the neck, the Soul Personage let out a mouthful of blood before flying a meter way, coming to a rough stop onto the ground. He did not get back up.

The Soul Warrior reacted slightly faster than his companion and took a full step back. He lifted his right hand and a black jackal type soulbeast came to his side with its jaws wide open to deliver a fatal blow. With a single fist from Bai Yunfei, it was sent flying back, and with his other fist, Bai Yunfei sent the owner flying sideways as well.

It was unclear on whether or not Bai Yunfei had intended to hit them in the direction of Jing Mingfeng or if it was just bad luck on their part, but Jing Mingfeng had not been kind to them. With a single kick at the midriff of the man, Jing Mingfeng sent the man

flying back to the ground. The jackal soulbeast remained motionless where it was since it had not received a command.

In a single instant, four men had been felled. Aside from the two Soul Sprites, there were still two Soul Warriors and a Soul Personage. However, there was still a huge gape in strength. Faced against a Soul Sprite, a Soul Warrior had very few ways to defend themselves. A Soul Personage was practically defenseless. They would be out of the equation in a fair match, let alone an ambush.

“Who are you two!? To interfere with the matters of the Beast Taming School, do you plan to make an enemy out of our school!?” The taller soul cultivator had finally regained his wits as he uttered very typical questions.

He had already staunched the bleeding on his right hand, and had also confirmed, with the other Soul Sprite, that one of invaders was an early-stage Soul Sprite while the other was a middle-grade Soul Sprite. Strength like this was not something they could afford to slight, so they called back their four soulbeasts and glared grimly at the opposing two men.

“Who cares about the Beast Taming School. If you displease me, then you’ll have to right your wrongs with a beating!” Jing Mingfeng snorted before lashing out with blinding speed at the Soul Personage on his left.

“Bah, you bark louder than a dog!” The shorter Soul Sprite snorted. With a point of his finger, the gray bird let out a shrill chirp as it flew toward Jing Mingfeng. The black bat followed close behind, but its speed was much slower than the bird’s speed because of its injuries.

The taller Soul Sprite didn’t mince his words either. The other side was clearly an enemy, so words would provide no benefit here. With a wave of his own hand, the golden eagle and the rainbow snake flew toward Bai Yunfei.

The remaining two Soul Warriors had woken to the situation.

They fell back to summon a boar type soulbeast and a jet-black python, the size of an arm, to fight Jing Mingfeng and Bai Yunfei.

The Soul Personage Jing Mingfeng had been fighting had already been knocked to the ground, completely unable to battle anymore.

“There’s still two fish to fry, one for you and one for me!” Jing Mingfeng laughed happily as the light under his feet lit up even brighter. Not even bothering to fight either soulbeast sent at him, he gracefully dodged the jet-black ball of liquid from the bat and the gust of wind from the bird before continuing on. Vaulting over the boar with a gentle pat of the hand, he landed on the other side without a single break in his stride.

With a sequence of movements as smooth as water thanks to his usage of the wind, Jing Mingfeng’s moved as smoothly as Bai Yunfei when he used the Wave Treading Steps, but on a faster scale. Naturally, this speed had been boosted by the agility boosting equipment he was wearing, so within several seconds, he arrived in front of one of the Soul Warriors.

That man was stunned — his eyes simply couldn’t keep up with Jing Mingfeng’s movements; thus, he was struck by Jian Mingfeng’s fist shortly after he threw his hands up to protect himself. With a bang sound, the man was sent flying with an aching pain running through his arms. He hadn’t been able to even fight back.

As Jing Mingfeng prepared to give chase, his eyes suddenly flew up as he hurriedly flew back. The moment after he had moved, a blade of wind swept past where he had originally been. It left a third-of-a-meter-long gap in the ground. After taking two steps back, Jing Mingfeng immediately threw himself to the side to avoid a glob of black liquid spat straight at his chest. Falling to the ground, a sizzling sound could be heard before the earth dissolved away.

“F*cking hell, how ruthless that is!?” Jing Mingfeng cried out in

exaggeration. With sparkling eyes, he stomped on the ground to leap a meter into the air to avoid the boar coming straight at him. When his feet touched the ground again, another two whirlwinds came once more...

As Jing Mingfeng was making a fuss over the three soulbeasts around him, Bai Yunfei himself was stuck in a siege from every side....

Chapter 119: Only Two Remain

While Jing Mingfeng was making a fuss over the three soulbeasts around him, Bai Yunfei himself was stuck in a siege from every side...

When Jing Mingfeng had charged at the Soul Warrior on the left, Bai Yunfei had made a dash for the Soul Warrior with the python. He wasn't a soul cultivator with a wind affinity, but he wasn't much slower than Jing Mingfeng. Leaving behind a trail of mirror images, Bai dodged the golden eagle and the snake's attack as he moved closer to his target.

That man was more astute than the Soul Warrior Jing Mingfeng was facing. When he had released the python, he had not ordered it to fly at Bai Yunfei. A low-sounding hiss could be heard from his lips as he flared his soulforce. With a flick of his finger, he gave another order to the python. It immediately sucked in a deep breath, causing its body to expand to the size of the man's thigh. It then coiled around the man's body as if it was meant to be used as a meat shield.

Before Bai Yunfei could reach the man, the python had completely coiled around the man's body with enough room for the python to stare at Bai Yunfei. Opening its mouth, a terrible stench could be smelled. It then extended its head to bite down on Bai Yunfei.

Confronted with this 'blanket' strike from the python, Bai Yunfei's eyes flashed with an attentive but calm glint. Tilting his body to the right, his legs pivoted and he swung past the python's mouth. He then pivoted back to his original position after his maneuver so that he would end up on the left side of the python.

"Hmph!" Lifting his right hand, Bai Yunfei's arm bulged as he slammed his fist into the python's head!

Threefold Fist Force!!

“Bang!” Following the muffled sound of a collision, a depression of about an inch appeared in the python’s head. As a result of being struck with such a tremendous amount of force, it flew to the side.

With the snake being successfully thrown aside, the Soul Warrior that had been hidden behind it was revealed once more. His mouth was left ajar as he looked at Bai Yunfei in shock. He didn’t expect to see a middle-grade third class Black Python to be knocked aside so easily.

Bringing back his right hand, Bai Yunfei prepared to land the final blow on the stunned Soul Warrior when all of a sudden his eyes narrowed together. Kicking off the ground, Bai Yunfei made a hasty retreat while turning to the right to lash out with his right hand.

While he fell back, a giant figure came crashing down toward his head. A pair of golden claws brushed past where his head had been. If he had not moved, his head would have been wiped clean off.

Even after dodging the golden eagle, Bai Yunfei did not relax in the slightest. His body followed his eyes as he turned around just in time to see a bright-colored snake fly out from the grass where his right hand was.

From far away, the Soul Sprite’s eyes lit up when he saw the snake come into contact with Bai Yunfei’s arm. With a malevolent smile, he said, “Even if you are a mid-stage Soul Sprite, you won’t be able to stave off death from the poison of a high-grade third class Rainbow Snake!”

“Pow!” Right in the middle of his pleased speech, a single popping sound could be heard as the Rainbow Snake was repelled, almost like it had been struck with an iron rod. It hadn’t moved at all during its flight as if it had been struck unconscious.

Looking back at Bai Yunfei, the Soul Sprite could clearly see two puncture holes that went through his clothes. How did Bai Yunfei not get poisoned by the venom of the snake? The reason why Bai

Yunfei hadn't bothered to move his right arm out of the way was the fact that he knew that there was no way for the snake to poison him. The part of his arm he had used to meet the snake head-on was where his Flameblade Bracer was located!

One simply had to ask that one question. How could a third-tier soulbeast bite through the Flameblade Bracer?

After knocking the snake aside, Bai Yunfei's foot stomped against the ground to stop his backward momentum. With a twist of his feet, he shot back toward the Soul Warrior with frightening speed.

Unable to call back his python soulbeast in time, the Soul Warrior had only been able to defend himself against two of Bai Yunfei's blows before being struck in the temple by a fist. Dazed, the man flew coincidentally to where his python was. Collapsing on top of it, neither python nor man got back up. They were now unable to continue fighting.

Barely after defeating that man, a strong gust of wind assaulted Bai Yunfei from behind. Without hesitation, Bai Yunfei bent over from the waist to allow the golden eagle's claws to streak over his back.

A blood-curling scream could be heard from behind at the same time as well as Jing Mingfeng's happy laughter. Twisting his head to look back, Bai Yunfei could only see Jing Mingfeng bringing back his right leg. His opponent, the other Soul Warrior, had a footprint on the left side of his face and blood coming from his mouth as he flew through the air. With a plopping sound, the man disappeared under the surface of the nearby lake.

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Not even ten minutes had past before Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng had taken care of the three Soul Warriors and four Soul Personages! All that was left were the two head Soul Sprites.

Jing Mingfeng had been pleased with himself after kicking the

Soul Warrior, but his eyes hadn't relaxed in the slightest. Two gusts of wind had forced him to kick off to the side, but before his leg could even land back on the ground, the gray bat came forward with a loud shriek. Flapping its wings, it flew up a meter. The claws on its feet came out to scratch at the back of Jing Mingfeng's head.

The moment the claws were coming at his head, Jing Mingfeng's eyes gave off a bright flash of light. Before he could even stabilize his footing on the ground, his left leg bent down to collect power. With a burst of azure light, he flew into the air with a stunning backflip. His right leg came flying down in a brilliant hook before landing squarely on top of the bat's head!

"Bang!!"

Slamming to the ground with a furious explosion, the bat's wings gave a weak shudder before collapsing. The bat was no longer able to continue fighting either.

Within an instant, another soulbeast had been defeated!

Ten meters away, the tall and short Soul Sprites stood still with ashen expressions. Bai Yunfei's and Jing Mingfeng's capabilities had been outside of their expectations. Even disregarding the fact that Bai Yunfei was a mid-stage Soul Sprite, the early-stage Soul Sprite Jing Mingfeng had been so fast that both men were simply stunned.

"Damn! Just who in the world are they!? Without even declaring what affiliation they have, what reason do they have for fighting us!?" The taller man cursed.

The shorter man continued to observe Jing Mingfeng as he dodged the blades of wind one after another with narrowed eyes, "Why? Of course it's for the quickshade bird! A soulbeast that is of the fifth class is something that any ordinary soul cultivator would take the risk for any day!"

“Ordinary soul cultivators you say? Do you think they’re ordinary soul cultivators?” The taller Soul Sprite shook his head as he watched the golden eagle miss Bai Yunfei again. He had been concerned about whether or not they could accomplish their initial task. Now they had to worry about whether or not they could deal with the sudden appearance of these two strangers...

Several meters away, Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng were currently engaged with the fourth class bird in close combat. Or perhaps it was better to say that they were blindly dodging the bird’s attacks.

In reality, each and every single time they dodged the bird’s attacks, the two of them had unknowingly approached closer and closer...

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Chapter 120: Mutual Understanding

For the sake of clearing away all of the weaker hindrances, Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng did not make an earlier attempt to rush at the Soul Sprites. Weaving left and right, they continued to dodge the birds flying in the air as they were attacked.

Both the Soul Sprites from the Beast Taming School had been relieved to see that their soulbeasts were successful in caging in the two newcomers. Because of their sudden arrival and the frantic state of mind they were in beforehand, the ambush had caught them off guard. All of their weaker men were as good as gone, and only the mid-stage fourth-tier galebird and goldfeathered eagle were left remaining. But even their strength had been reduced from their initial fight with the quickshade bird. It had been fortunate that they had just enough strength to refrain from being eliminated too quickly.

“Brother, what should we do now?” Feng Hao (The taller one) looked to the shorter one with an inquisitive glance.

Tai Ping (The shorter one), had regarded the situation with a grim expression, “What else can we do? We spent more than half a month to track down the quickshade bird, but at the very last moment, we lost it because of these people, blast it all!”

“Must we really let it be like this? The quickshade bird was to be delivered to the Zhao family....” Fang Hao looked off into the direction where the quickshade bird flew off to with unease.

“Do you really think that we have any chance of recapturing it? If it weren’t for the fact they aren’t willing to kill, then our men on the ground would be dead instead of unconscious!” Tai Ping spat in agony. “Did you not realize that they aren’t alone either? Over by those trees....they may have hidden themselves well, but I can bet their companions are there! Think about it. Even if we got the quickshade bird, how would we make our escape!?”

“I....”

Fang Hao was about to say something when Tai Ping grew alarmed and cried out, “Careful!”

Whipping his head around, Fang Hao was just in time to see the goldfeathered eagle come crashing down with its golden feathers wrapped with a golden light. As if it was expanding, the light continued down onto Bai Yunfei and swiped at him.

As for the galebird, it had been releasing a gust of wind one after another. Compressed into a blade-like shape, each blade of wind shot forth towards Jing Mingfeng like they were blades that carved the air towards Jing Mingfeng. At each critical moment, Jing Mingfeng had been able to dodge each one of them with a burst of light from underneath his feet.

But it was only now that the two beast tamers had realized that Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng had been substantially closer than before. Somehow, the distance had been reduced to a mere thirty meters, and before the two beast tamers could send another command to their soulbeasts, the other two had already crossed over to them!

In the moment of crossing over, Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng glanced at each other with a knowing look as if agreeing on some sort of previous point. Both their hands flew up as if to push out at the air!

“Pow!!”

A sharp echo could be heard as both of their right feet slammed into the ground. Borrowing that momentum, they were able to deviate from their earlier path and shoot away at a ninety degree angle!

The goldfeathered eagle had been just mere moments away from bringing its talons down onto Bai Yunfei’s head. But when Bai Yunfei had suddenly moved aside, the goldfeathered eagle had

been unable to change its direction and had been struck by several blades of wind in place of Jing Mingfeng!

“Bang!!”

A dull bang rang through the air as the body of the eagle was unceremoniously sent flying backwards through the air. There had been an indent in its chest from where the blades of wind had struck and its feathers were slowly drifting down from the air from the sudden displacement. Its defenses had been extraordinarily strong and was able to resist the gust of wind from breaking apart its iron-like shell. But it was still clear to see that this gigantic strike had done more than enough damage to it.

When the goldfeathered eagle was thrown backwards, Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng did not stop to admire their handiwork. As soon as they retreated several meters, they whirled around and flew off towards where the two soulbeasts would be!

The goldfeathered eagle had been forced to come crashing back down to the earth as a result from the attack. Just barely a meter over the ground, it regained its sense of balance, but at that same exact moment, Bai Yunfei had already reappeared and was ready to strike it down!

Lashing out with his right fist, Bai Yunfei had unleashed another Threecold Fist Force onto the chest of the eagle. Having been sent flying once more, the eagle this time was no longer able to keep itself afloat and fell back down to the ground with great speed.

On the other side, Jing Mingfeng’s target had been that galebird who was situated just a few meters above the ground. Jing Mingfeng gave a shake of his right hand so that a black dagger would appear in his hand. Then, as he got within a ten meter radius of it, he suddenly came to a stop as both of his hands clasped onto the dagger. Looking at the bird with glowing eyes, he began to concentrate on his hands with so much attention that a bright ray of azure light began to emanate from the blade. “Wind blade? I

know that move as well!"

The elemental wind began to whirl and rotate around the short dagger for a brief moment before jetting out straight for the galebird!

"Whoosh!"

A two meter blade of wind had immediately surged through the air before relentlessly striking against the bird.

Because of the delay from its initial move, the galebird had been unable to prevent the blade of wind from coming at it. Trying its best to fly to the side, the galebird had only just managed to slide past the blade of wind which had chafed across its left side.

But from underneath, Jing Mingfeng had a pleased smile on his face. After he had let out the first blade of wind, he had already swung both of his hands to the side.

"Blow apart!!"

Following his shout, the gust of wind that had blown past the galebird had immediately blown apart to turn into a net about two meters wide. Its speed had not decreased in the slightest and had successfully slammed into the galebird.

It had been unexpected that after being struck by this wind, the galebird would flew in the opposite direction for roughly a hundred meters.

.....

It had only taken less than a minute for Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng to cross over one another and use this 'ambush' to defeat the goldfeathered eagle and then the other galebird in a single swift operation.

The cooperation between Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng had been superb. Even through silence, they were able to seemingly communicate their intentions silently as if they had been partners

for many years.

Just a dozen meters away, the two beast tamers had stood deathly still with open mouths. Neither of them had expected that their ‘not easily defeatable’ soulbeasts would be....so easily defeatable. By the time they had gotten their nerves back, they had been shocked to realize that Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng had shot straight for them after disposing of the soulbeast!

Unable to carry out their plan for negotiations, the two beast tamers could only retreat in a hurry when faced against those two.

The golden rope in Feng Hao’s right hand let out an illuminating sheen as it shot forth from his hand like a lively serpent at Bai Yunfei. Tai Ping’s right hand had shot out a well. A rather long short-dagger had somehow made its way into his hand as it made a hasty swipe at Jing Mingfeng.

Bai Yunfei had allowed for the rope to coil around his right hand. As if it was alive, the rope had immediately constrained itself around his right arm with a speed that did not fully manifest its gripping strength. Unfortunately for Feng Hao, the rope had coiled around the Flameblade Bracer and had done no influence at all over Bai Yunfei....

With his right arm connected with the rope, Bai Yunfei gave a hearty tug on it. The tension in the rope had forced Feng Hao to stumble forward half a step before his mind had registered the pain coming from his wrist. Bai Yunfei’s left hand had chopped down onto the hand holding onto the rope and forced him to slacken his grip on it. Now that the rope had been lost to him, Feng Hao had been dumbstruck Bai Yunfei’s right hand had then let out an ear-piercing sound as it impaled against his abdomen!

On the other side, there had been the whooshing sound from a blade being swung downwards. Jing Mingfeng had merely brought his black dagger up to defend it with a smirk. Following the clanging sound afterwards, the strange weapon of Tai Ping had

been stopped by the dagger and had even revealed a small jag in its blade!

Having blocked the slash, Jing Mingfeng took advantage of his opponent's delay from pulling his sword back to let loose a right kick onto his opponent's groin. The panicked man's face had quickly turned purple from the heinous blow as he clutched at his groin and let out a pained shout. All that had been left for Jing Mingfeng to do was to let out a healthy uppercut onto the opponent's chin to send him flying away.

Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng did not escalate the fight from there any longer. Both men from the Beast Taming School had been knocked away with blood coming out from their mouths. Only Jing Mingfeng had been rather cruel in method and knocked out two of Tai Ping's teeth....

Swinging his right hand carefreely, Jing Mingfeng turned his head to look at Bai Yunfei collect the golden rope into his own space ring. With raised eyebrows, Jing Mingfeng looked back to the strange weapon in Tai Ping's hand. Quirking his lips, he let out a sigh in regret as if to say, "I messed up. If only I had known that I wanted to take his weapon earlier...."

The two men that had been fighting Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng had been sent flying for a good ten meters before finally tumbling back down to the ground. It had been with terrified eyes that they looked at the two calm males in front of them.

"You'd find it in your best interest to stop the last two soulbeasts or you won't find me as kind as before!" Bai Yunfei looked to the two beast tamers as he spoke.

Blanching, the two beast tamers had immediately commanded for their soulbeasts behind Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng to come to a stop. Having seen the unflinching faces of the two, Tai Ping could only shake his head helplessly. The Galebird and Goldfeathered Eagle had then flew around Jing Mingfeng and Bai

Yunfei before landing back on top of the heads of their respective owners. With a careful shake of their feathers, neither of the birds looked ready to strike anymore.

“Just who....who are you two?” After careful deliberation, the shorter man had asked with an albeit softer voice due to his mouth in pain from losing two teeth and making it harder to talk as a result.

“That doesn’t matter. The only thing that does is that the quickshade bird is returned to us.” Bai Yunfei smiled, “And now. You may all leave.”

Chapter 121: Saving the Quickshade Bird, But What has Happened?

“That doesn’t matter. The only thing that does is that the quickshade bird has returned to us.” Bai Yunfei smiled, “And now, you may all leave.”

Bai Yunfei’s words had caused Tai Ping to be taken back for a moment. The light in his eyes flickered for a moment before thinking of something to say. With a disgruntled look, he spoke to Bai Yunfei, “If you wish to capture that quickshade bird, then we shall admit our defeat here. But, if you could please leave your names so that we may one day return the favor.....”

“Ha! Do you take us to be idiots? Or do you think we’ll tell you, are you the idiot then?” Jing Mingfeng couldn’t help but chortle. “Beast Taming School, ha! How scary, if I told you my identity, then wouldn’t I die a miserable death then?”

Exaggerating his words, Jing Mingfeng’s face had soon turned to become rather fierce, “Hmph. If I tell you to leave, then you better get lost right f*cking now! If I change my mind and kill you all here, you won’t even have the chance to return the favor in the future!”

His words had been effective in its intimidation. The two of them had only gulped as they looked at each other. Without another word, they carefully walked around them to pick up their fallen comrades and soulbeasts and walked away from the left side of the forest in defeat.

Seeing how they had collect their stoic soulbeasts into their space rings, Bai Yunfei had a slightly uncomfortable look on his face. Because of his meeting with Hong Yin, Bai Yunfei did not look too favorably on the Beast Taming School. From his heart, he took them to be disgusting. These soulless soulbeasts were completely different than from the lively and cute Xiao Tang from before. His

sympathies for these soulbeasts had furthered increase when he saw them being used like tools. Inversely, his hatred for the Beast Taming School had increased as well to the point where his eyes couldn't help but leak some killing intent.

It wasn't as if he didn't have the idea of taking the soulbeasts. If he did, Bai Yunfei wouldn't even know where to start on what to do with them afterwards. The beast tamers themselves were already a troublesome group. Admitting defeat and fighting to their death were two separate things. But it had been for the best. If they had been unwilling to give up, Bai Yunfei wasn't sure if he would be able to really kill them or not....

But the small sliver of killing intent that had leaked from Bai Yunfei had been noticed by Tai Ping and Fang Hao, causing them to shiver. The two bird soulbeasts they controlled flew slightly lower as if afraid of dropping their guard against Bai Yunfei. At the same time, their footsteps picked up so as to take them out of the forest even faster....

Long after they left, Jing Mingfeng let out a sigh and asked Bai Yunfei, "How is it?"

Drawing back his soulsense, Bai Yunfei nodded his head, "Yea, they're gone."

"Phew...." Jing Mingfeng let out a long sigh before dropping the stern expression on his face. With a swipe of his hand over his face, his original face had returned. Swinging his hands into the air in excitement, he laughed out loud, "Haha, that was a good fight!! It's a good thing that they gave up, my soulforce would have run out if they continued to fight...."

Bai Yunfei smiled as well as he let his original appearance appear on his face. There had been a rustling sound from behind as Tianming emerged from the bushes to run out to them.

"Wahaha, brother Bai, brother Jing, you two were amazing!!" Tianming ran up to the two of them with a face filled with

adoration. “With just the two of you, you were able to beat the others away! Too cool!”

“Eh? Hehe, do you think I’m cool?” Jing mingfeng’s eyes lit up as he stroked his chin as if drunk on the praise.

“Yea! You’re awesome!” Tianming praised him again. “That wind blade was especially too cool! The fact that you can change your face is super cool! I want to learn that soul skill too, could you teach me, brother Jing?”

“Of course I ca-what? Brat, were you trying to take advantage of this moment to trick me?” Jing Mingfeng had caught onto Tianming’s words and laughed, “You’re only a Soul Personage. It’s far too early for you to learn this soul skill. Wait until you become a Soul Sprite, we’ll talk then!”

Bai Yunfei shook his head when he saw the look of disappointment on Tianming’s face. “Well then, that’s that. We can leave now. Where’s miss Tang and aunty Zhao?”

“Oh, them? After the quickshade bird flew off, it took off towards the village behind us. Miss Xinyun and aunty Zhao ran on over to it....” Tianming pointed off in the direction he had mentioned for Bai Yunfei.

“Eh?” Bai Yunfei turned his head to look and spread out his soulsense. Letting out a swear, he spoke, “Something happened, let’s hurry on over!”

.....

Turning the clock back a little bit, the quickshade bird had only just been freed from the rope thanks to Bai Yunfei. With a tremendous amount of effort, it was finally able to break free and fly away.

When Tang Xinyun saw that Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng were fighting the others, she hesitated for a moment before turning around to run off in the direction the bird flew in.

“Miss Xinyun, where are you going?” Tianming whispered.

“I’m going to find the quickshade bird!” Tang Xinyun replied before quickly chasing after it. Aunty Zhao had hesitated too for a moment to look at Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng fight the group of people there. But when she saw that they were taking care of them without a problem, she spoke a word to Tianming and ran off after Tang Xinyun.

“Oh, that’s fine then. I’ll sit here and wait. You can go....” Tianming nodded his head before turning back to watch the fight.

Running for three hundred meters, Tang Xinyun had finally sensed a weak amount of soulforce. Looking to a nearby tree, she saw the quickshade bird hidden on one of the branches.

A steady flow of blood could be seen from the quickshade bird’s body. With its beak quivering in pain and its throat letting out a small chirp, the bird was trying its best to look up into the blue skies. Its small eyes had reflected the pain it was feeling as it held its right wing underneath it. Unable to even turn over, its left wing flapped uselessly with blood splattering everywhere as it tried to take off once more to enjoy the freedom it would have in the skies.

It was only when Tang Xinyun had gotten within ten meters of it that the bird had sensed her approach. Turning to her, the bird let out an unwilling chirp as despair overcame it.

“Don’t....don’t you worry. I won’t capture you.” Tang Xinyun slowed her footsteps as she lifted her hands up in sign of bearing no ill will. “I know you can understand what I’m saying, do you remember me? We met three days ago, I won’t hurt you....”

The bird’s eyes seemed to have softened at Tang Xinyun’s words and its movements calmed down by a marginal amount. Letting out two chirps, the vigilant light in its eyes seemed to have disappeared.

Tang Xinyun naturally didn’t know what the bird had said and

could only inch closer to it to get to its side. Squatting down, she looked at the quivering injured bird with a pained look. Reaching out a hand, she moved to try and pick it up.

Seeing how Tang Xinyun had extended an arm towards it, the quickshade bird had been startled. Almost as if frightened, the bird had instinctively pecked at Tang Xinyun's right palm with its beak.

"Ah!"

Tang Xinyun had let out a pained sound as she looked at the small wound on her palm. Blood had been spilled out and soon pooled over her delicate hand.

"Young miss!" Aunty Zhao had caught up to her by this point and moved to run to her but was stopped by Tang Xinyun.

"Aunty Zhao, don't come on over. It's only afraid...." Tang Xinyun spoke. Looking again at the bird, she spoke warmly, "Don't be afraid. I won't hurt you. You're heavily hurt and need treatment. Let me help you okay? It'll be like last time...."

This time, the bird had not put up anymore resistance and had instead looked blankly at Tang Xinyun. Because of her eyes, the bird was at a loss for what to do.

Carefully holding the bird into her hands, Tang Xinyun had realized that it was far smaller than before. Its left wing had a terrible wound about three inches long that had split apart from its exertion.

Tang Xinyun couldn't help but feel disturbed as she carefully touched around the injured area. The blood on her own hand was dripping down onto the bird's own wings, but Tang Xinyun didn't seem to look at all bothered by her own wounds. Gingerly, she pressed against the wound and closed her eyes to allow her soulforce to flow into the bird,

Feeling the soulforce enter its body, the quickshade bird let out a small chirp. Its body began to tremble as the unaware light

gradually disappeared from its eyes. There had been a complicated look in its eyes as it stared at Tang Xinyun, but it felt grateful nonetheless.

Walking up to Tang Xinyun, the aunty looked at her back with furrowed eyes. She understood Tang Xinyun's nature the most and knew that there would be no way for her to convince her younger charge to not save the soulbeast, but....

"This quickshade bird is far too injured. You could transfer all of your soulforce into it, but this is a soulbeast of the fifth-tier, young miss. As a Soul Warrior, you don't have even enough soulforce to heal it completely...." The woman shook her head. "Finally, it was just fighting for its survival not too long ago, its lifeforce is surely at an end..."

She knew that what Tang Xinyun was useless, but she was reluctant to stop her. With a helpless sigh, the woman turned her head to look off towards the direction where Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng were with her soulsense activated.

"Those two boys aren't ordinary by any means. Even without using their true skills, they were able to maintain the advantage." With narrowed eyes, the woman thought to herself even more, "But still....I didn't think that those men would be from the Beast Taming School. It is a good thing that we didn't show ourselves. That would have been a troublesome thing if we did. Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng can change their faces, but we should split apart to avoid any more trouble befalling the young miss...."

"Aah!!"

Just at that moment, a cry came out from Tang Xinyun's mouth. Startled, aunty Zhao looked on over where she too had been stunned to see what was in front of her.

"Tha—that's...."

Chapter 122: Soul Contract

A three-meter-long, one-meter-wide whirlwind had suddenly formed and sent the nearby leaves flying about. Through the wind, Tang Xinyun could be seen staring at the great transformation that had occurred, but she had no idea what had caused such a reaction.

“Young miss!” Zhao Mancha cried out. A bright glow of light encompassed her body as she was just about to “save” her young charge.

“Aunty Zhao! Don’t interfere!”

Just as she was about to leap in, a warning shout came out from behind her. Bai Yunfei, Jing Mingfeng, and Tianming were quickly walking toward her.

“Why are you stopping me? The young miss is in danger!” Aunty Zhao was at a loss for why Bai Yunfei tried to stop him before trying once more to go into the whirlwind.

“It’s best if you don’t move just yet. Otherwise you’ll put miss Tang in even more danger!” Bai Yunfei knew that she was worried, so he asked, “Look carefully, is miss Tang really in any danger?”

“If I remember correctly, this is most likely...” Bai Yunfei moved to stop Zhao Mancha while studying Tang Xinyun in the middle of the whirlwind. There was a strange glint in his eyes as if he was looking at something extremely unexpected.

“Do you know what this is? Say it, what’s going on here.” The aunt’s voice stabilized a little bit when she realized that Tang Xinyun wasn’t in danger, but now the soulforce in the area had become rather curious.

Hesitating, Bai Yunfei replied, “If I’m not wrong, this is... what happens when a soul contract is formed!”

“Soul contract!!”

Jing Mingfeng and Zhao Mancha spoke at the same time, surprised about what Bai Yunfei had said.

“Yes, if I’m right, this is exactly that.” Bai Yunfei nodded as he continued to observe Tang Xinyun with curiosity. No matter how much he studied the situation, this scenario was exactly as Hong Yin described. This is what would happen during a contract between a soul cultivator and a soulbeast.

“An exchange of soulforce is to share everything. Not only is soulforce shared, but even their lives become linked... Yes, this is exactly how brother Hong Yin had described a soul contract! From the looks of this, it was the quickshade bird that initiated it! But it won’t be that easy...” Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up with skepticism. “But, why? Why did the quickshade bird decide to offer a soul contract with miss Tang... was it because she’s saving its life? The short connection of life during this period would indeed let it recover quickly, but still, it isn’t close to dying anymore. It was trying its best to prevent being captured by the Beast Taming School, so why offer a soul contract?”

As his mind whirled with his thoughts, Bai Yunfei said to Tang Xinyun, “Miss Tang! Do not reject the connection into your soul! Accept the soul of the quickshade bird, and focus on that! As long as you communicate with it, you will form a soul contract! From today on, it will be your soulbeast partner!”

Tang Xinyun didn’t respond to Bai Yunfei. Whether it was because she didn’t hear him or if she couldn’t respond, Bai Yunfei didn’t know. The two soulforces were slowly ebbing back and forth between the two parties, but no one else was able to sense it. Bai Yunfei shook his head at Zhao Mancha to express that she shouldn’t worry and that she should back away to wait for what happens next. The orange glow surrounding her body slowly dissipated into the air. However, her eyes were still nervous, and she was still ready to move should the situation arise.

Several minutes later, the rapidly spinning whirlwind slowed

down by a decent amount before finally dissipating. Leaves and branches scattered everywhere, and Tang Xinyun could be seen sprawled on the ground with a rather tiny quickshade bird nested in her arms. Both of them remained motionless.

“Young miss!” The aunt cried out in alarm as she rushed on over to inspect Tang Xinyun. Realizing that she had fainted due to soulforce exhaustion, she let out a sigh of relief.

“Didn’t I say she would be alright? Aunty, you need to relax. Miss Tang will recover soon enough.” Bai Yunfei looked around to everyone. “Well then, let’s go back. I bet boss Huang has been waiting for us for a very long time now. I heard that he’s waiting for us at a road stop nearby. Let’s hurry on over and let miss Tang rest there.”

.....

That night within a bigger inn.

Bored to death, Bai Yunfei, Jing Mingfeng, and Tianming sat around a square table while eating shelled peanuts and talking with each other. Huang Wan and the other travelers sat by the few tables to the sides, and conversed to one another in quiet voices. Within the spacious area, there were still several other travelers that had stopped by this place to have their meal. Since Guyi City wasn’t too far away, the amount of people that traveled here were many.

“Sigh...” Jing Mingfeng tossed several peanuts into his mouth. Followed by a swig of wine, he let out a disappointed sigh.

“Brother Jing, you’ve been sighing for a long time now. What’s been on your mind?” Tianming asked out of curiosity as he ate his peanuts at a leisurely pace.

“Hehe, I bet... he’s probably depressed about the fact that the quickshade bird formed a soul contract with Tang Xinyun.” Bai Yunfei smiled as he sipped his own cup of tea.

“How could I not be depressed?” Jing Mingfeng quirked his lips in ‘sorrow’, “It was a fifth-grade soulbeast! A wind element quickshade bird... we were the ones that saved him. Why didn’t he choose me then? You’re a fire type, and I’m a wind type. It was no contest who would be chosen! But, before I could even get a chance to talk to it, it already chose another to soulbind with...”

“You’ve been depressed for an entire afternoon already, give it a rest.” Bai Yunfei shook his head. “Didn’t you hear aunty Zhao say that the quickshade bird was on the verge of death? If miss Tang hadn’t been there to form a soul contract, then you’d be trying to communicate with a dead bird. That bird is an unwilling creature. Even if it died, it wouldn’t submit to the Beast Taming School. So, even though you saved it, I doubt it’ll allow itself to be your soulbeast partner. Tang Xinyun had the chance and had the heart to tempt the quickshade bird. It was this luck that helped her, just accept it...”

“Agh...” Jing Mingfeng fell into depression again at those words. Pouring himself another cup, he held the wine bottle to Bai Yunfei, “Come on gramps, take a sip or two. What kind of man doesn’t drink? Do you want people to hate you or something?”

“Gramps...” Bai Yunfei’s lips quirked. After the silent exchange they had during that afternoon, the relationship between the two looked as if it had become close together. This new name Jing Mingfeng had come up with for him was something that Bai Yunfei wasn’t inclined to stop. Shaking his head, he replied, “If I’m hated, that’s fine. I won’t drink. It’s bitter and pungent. What is so good about drinking that?”

“What’s so bad about drinking? If you get drunk, you can just use your soulforce to disperse the alcohol can’t you?”

“Then what’s the point of drinking wine? I’d much rather drink tea.” Bai Yunfei took another sip of his tea.

“Pft, not even a single bit of heroism to you. It’s a wonder how

you're a fire type; the other fire soul cultivators are all heroes or villains. In general, they're all straightforward people." Jing Mingfeng looked down at Bai Yunfei with a smile, "Then, Tianming, do you want a sip?"

"Yes! Yes! I want to be like a man and drink! How great it'll be..." Tianming nodded his head in elation.

"Good! That's the spirit! Come, I'll pour you a cup. You'll be satisfied, I guarantee it!" Jing Mingfeng laughed as he poured a cup of wine.

Taking the wine cup, Tianming gave it a curious sniff. Then, following Jing Mingfeng's example, he drained it in a single gulp...

Three seconds later, Tianming's face turned 'slightly' red, like a monkey. Twitching just slightly, he drained the rest of his tea cup so that even the leaves from were gone.

"Eh..." Bai Yunfei's mouth twitched as he let out a curse to Jing Mingfeng, "Look what you did. You're always tormenting him. The way I see it, he's even more exaggerated than I am..."

Then Tianming suddenly said, "Haha, I'm fine! Absolutely fine! I feel... I feeelllll pretty good. Hehe, so this is what it feels like to have a drink..."

"What was that? Have you never drank before?" Jing Mingfeng asked.

"Nope. Never. My house is pretty strict! I couldn't even take a step outside. Can't do this, can't do that... mother and grandmother were so strict, always nagging me about this or that. They always treated me like a child. It was annoying!" Tianming's face was flushed with a red hue. Somehow, he had gotten drunk from a single cup.

Narrowing his eyes, Bai Yunfei was about to say something when he sensed something weird behind him. Bai Yunfei turned just in time to see Zhao Mancha walk down from the second story.

“Aunty Zhao, how’s miss Tang?” Bai Yunfei asked the weary woman as he handed her a cup of tea.

“How’s the quickshade bird?” Jing Mingfeng asked in addition.

Taking a sip of her tea to calm herself, the woman responded, “There hasn’t been anything major. She woke up just now, but then went back to sleep. That soul contract took a lot out of her. She was on the verge of making a breakthrough to the Soul Sprite realm and condensing her essence windseed, but she ended up throwing that away while increasing her burdens even more. I assume she will be back to normal tomorrow...”

“She gave it up? Why?” The three males asked in confusion.

“That’s because the young lady wishes to cultivate the elemental fire...” The aunty spoke with a shake of her head before changing the subject, “Did you take care of the beast tamers properly? Did they find out who you were?”

“Of course not. Aunty, you don’t need to worry. We were lenient with them. As long as we travel carefully, we won’t encounter any more trouble. With how we changed our faces, they won’t be able to find us no matter how much they try...” Jing Mingfeng waved his hand.

“That’s good then...” Zhao Mancha sighed in relief.

“Our food’s here. Let’s eat first. Today has been a tiring day. After we eat, we can hurry up on the road tomorrow.” Bai Yunfei spoke as soon as he spotted a waiter bringing a platter of food.

.....

That night within his room, Bai Yunfei sat on top of his bed, he recalled the day’s events. After careful deliberation, Bai Yunfei shook his hand to take an item out.

It was the golden rope he had taken...

Chapter 123: Compliant Rope

Equipment Grade: Middle Rare

Attack: 326

Upgrade Requirement: 67 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei looked at the rope in his hands with some disappointment, “Ah... this is all that a mid-human tier soul armament amounts to?”

If Fang Hao knew what Bai Yunfei was thinking right now, he would have undoubtedly puked blood. This soul armament was specifically picked for capturing the quickshade bird, and he had only managed to procure it with great difficulty. Now that Bai Yunfei knew the soul armament was such a lowly item, he really...

“Eh, maybe I’m getting ahead of myself.” Bai Yunfei could feel himself growing a little too greedy. With a jeer, he thought to himself, “Let me upgrade it first. The Glacial Pricker was only a low rare with pretty decent attributes. Who knows, maybe the rope will fare better than that.”

“Upgrade.”

.....

Roughly ten minutes later.

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Middle Rare

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 326

Additional Attack: 151

+10 Additional Effect: By consuming additional soulforce, you may lengthen and shorten the rope and control it at will. The rope may be extended from a fifth of its original length to up to five times its original length. The longer it extends, the weaker it becomes. The shorter it becomes, the stronger it becomes."

Upgrade Requirement: 67 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei was slightly stunned by the effects of the golden rope. "This ability... is a little strange, isn't it?"

After thinking to himself for a moment, he helplessly shook his head, "Let's give it a try. I wonder what it'll do!"

Bai Yunfei carefully examined the rope to figure out which end was the front and which was the back. He noticed that one end of the rope was about ten centimeters of roughened fabric where a handle would normally be. On the other end was a small pointed tip. When Bai Yunfei felt it, it felt like it was shaped like a small dart tip.

Holding onto the handle, Bai Yunfei whipped it to the side. There was a swishing sound before another popping sound could be heard. The rope had slapped against the door to his tent about fifteen meters away.

"That's a long distance!" Bai Yunfei was startled. He had only wanted to roll it out a little bit. He didn't think that it would extend that far in such a short amount of time.

Thinking for a little bit, he channeled a some of his soulforce into the golden rope. The next moment, he felt as if the golden rope had integrated with his own body, like his arm had extended several meters.

When he used the Fire-tipped Spear, he felt the same sensation as this one. The only difference was that the Fire-tipped Spear gave him the feeling of 'intimacy,' almost like they were inseparable.

This golden rope gave the feeling of ‘strangeness.’ It also felt like it was ‘doing as it pleased.’

Giving his right hand a little shake, a ‘rope wave’ came from the handle of the whip all the way to its end. With a ‘pop’ sound that rang through the air, the long rope seemed to slowly contort as if alive. He glanced to the stool to his left, and the rope seemed to have received an order as it flew toward the stool. Wrapping around one of its legs, the rope yanked it through the air with a whooshing sound before Bai Yunfei grabbed it with his left hand.

“Hey, this is pretty easy.” Bai Yunfei plopped the stool down with great interest in his eyes. This was the very first time he had used a rope type soul armament; thus, he felt very curious about it.

“Let me try to lengthen and shorten it then...”

.....

After “playing” for ten minutes or so, Bai Yunfei finally stopped with his happy experimenting.

When extended five times its normal length, the rope had been around seventy meters long. Bai Yunfei had felt as if there had been a snake ‘coiled’ around the tent. Bai Yunfei had come to the realization that the longer the rope, the thinner it became. The rope had been very fine at the very end. The rope itself felt softer at that time, but its ‘toughness’ was still the same.

Shrinking it down to the shortest he could, Bai Yunfei was left with a golden rod a little over two meters long. He could easily wave the rod, and feel as if it was a spear in his hand.

Since this golden rope could be lengthened and shortened at will, Bai Yunfei gave it some thought before finally naming the rope “Compliant Rope”...

Returning the Compliant Rope to his space ring, Bai Yunfei let out a yawn before laying on his bed.

“I’ll rest up and then upgrade the rest of my equipment later...”

.....

On the second day, when everyone filed out of the inn prepared to leave, Tang Xinyun came down followed by Zhao Mancha. Slowly walking out of the doors, she wore yet another white-robe, and a faint smile lingered on her face as if nothing had changed. The only difference now was the fact that perched on her right shoulder was a small, white, sparrow-sized bird. After carefully observing, one would realize this bird was clearly the very same eagle-sized quickshade bird from yesterday.

“Miss Tang, is that...” Seeing the white bird, Bai Yunfei slowly realized who it was, but he did not fully voice his question. Jing Mingfeng and Tianming had both crowded forward to curiously stare at the bird.

“Yes, it’s the very same quickshade bird from yesterday, but it’s rather small right now. It’s the most convenient method to travel as of now.” Tang Xinyun nodded her head with a smile. When she tilted her head to look at the bird, she asked, “Xiao Bai, do you remember these two? They saved you yesterday, give them your thanks...”

“Xi-Xiao Bai...” Jing Mingfeng felt stunned. Giving Bai Yunfei a queer look, his face then began to twitch. Hooking Tianming by the arm, the two of them quickly moved to the side to chuckle in an evil manner.

Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but feel his lips twitch as well. When he heard the name “Xiao Bai,” for some reason, his very first thought was “Xiao Bai? Why does that sound like a name for a dog?”

“Chirrrp!!” As if sensing the meaning behind everyone’s laughter, the quickshade bird, “Xiao Bai,” let out a disgruntled chirp before beating its wings to take flight.

“What’s going on? What’s wrong with the name Xiao Bai?” Tang Xinyun found the reaction of everyone there to be strange, so she asked questions in confusion.

“No, it’s nothing. Xiao Bai is a good name. Very cute even...” Jing Mingfeng interjected from the side before turning to Bai Yunfei with an earnest look, “What about you, Gramps Bai?”

After uttering those last two words, he leaped into the air in order to dodge the kick Bai Yunfei had sent his way. Then laughing, he and Tianming ran ahead.

“That...” Tang Xinyun had heard the final remark, and couldn’t help but look at Bai Yunfei with an embarrassed expression.

“Haha, miss Tang, don’t worry about it. Boss Huang should be ready to set out now. We should go with them. We should be able to reach Guyi City by the end of today...” Bai Yunfei smiled. With a nod to Zhao Mancha, Bai Yunfei and the rest of the group set off once more.

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By night time, the group reached their destination — Guyi City.

The group slowly disbanded while Huang Wan dealt with the negotiations. Bai Yunfei, Tang Xinyun, and the others wandered through the streets, strolling around. Huang Wan had said that they would be staying in the Prosperity Inn tonight. He also thanked Bai Yunfei and the others for their ‘protection.’ At the same time, he mentioned that all of the night time preparations had been made for them as well.

Everyone walked through the streets feeling relaxed. Tianming was the most excited as he looked left and right throughout the city. Every so often, he would nitpick at the merchandise to the side whenever he found fault, saying that the so-and-so store in Gaoyi City had better merchandise, or that this store didn’t have the same charm as the other, or would just say something for whatever reason...

When Jing Mingfeng accidentally brought up the matters of his family, Tianming puffed out his cheeks and said, after becoming

disgruntled, “Don’t talk about it. That family bores me to death! The kids of my second and third uncle always bully me, and my older brother is always with father. He’s rarely at home, and whenever he and I fight, my mother always scolds me, saying that I shouldn’t be causing trouble with them. Pah! Who was the one that said they should pick a fight with me? I won’t take it lying down! And there’s nanny as well, she spends the entire day chattering and nagging away! It bores me to tears I tell you! I don’t even want to see her, I...”

Halfway through his speech, there was a sudden queer atmosphere that descended over the area. When he turned his head to look, he realized that Bai Yunfei and the others were all giving him a look as if there was some... discontent?

“Wha-what’s wrong?” Tianming realized that he must have said something wrong. He felt his neck draw in within itself as if questioning his words.

Bai Yunfei let out a light sigh as he prepared an earnest explanation, “Tianming, allow me to speak honestly. You shouldn’t talk about your family that way. Furthermore, you shouldn’t treat them that way either... whether it is your parents or grandparents, they are still people you should respect. The ‘loving care’ they provide you is something that you cannot ignore and cannot hate. If it were not for the fact that I know that your heart isn’t in your words, then I would have long since ceased any relationship I had with you. Out of everything in life, filial piety is the most important. A person that doesn’t understand that is not a friend of mine.”

“That’s... I...” Tianming’s face became blank as if he was growing anxious.

“You probably won’t understand it completely just yet, but I hope that you will come to realize it sooner rather than later...” Bai Yunfei gave him a small smile as if teaching a small child, “Do you know what it means to be a ‘family?’

“Wha?” Tianming shook his head blankly as if lost by Bai Yunfei’s question.

Bai Yunfei pointed in front of them, “That, that is what ‘family’ is.”

Just a hundred meters or so down the street on a corner, two rather frail figures could be seen sitting on the ground. There was a child that looked to be twelve or thirteen years old. His clothes were in a dilapidated state, and they revealed the nearly pearly-white arms he possessed. His hair was frazzled and ragged as if he had not showered in days. Yet, in his hand was half a steamed bun that he was using to carefully feed, piece by piece, a woman around the age of seventy.

The old woman was slumped against the wall. Her clothes were torn, but her white hair was not as frazzled as the child’s hair. Instead, it had neatly been combed by someone. She was less frail-looking than the small child, but her eyes had sunk into her face. They were clearly dim in comparison to the norm.

The steamed bun was quickly finished off by the woman, and the young child brought out a bowl. He started to let the woman drink from it.

At that moment, a single person came walking by and threw a single copper coin. The young child’s face lit up as he picked up the coin. Kneeling on the ground, the child kowtowed to the one who had given him the coin before running back to the woman. He started to say something out of excitement to her...

With flashing eyes, Bai Yunfei began to walk toward them.

“No matter where you go, there will always be people living like this... but even as hard as the times are, you must never leave each other. This... this is what it means to be family...”

Chapter 124: Assistance

The actions that the youth performed were rather astonishing to the eyes of the group. When Bai Yunfei started to walk toward the two, everyone else realized what was happening and followed behind.

On the way, Bai Yunfei's eyes wandered around the area before finally settling back on the two figures in the corner. Then his body made a sudden whirl to the left.

"Eh? Brother Bai, aren't you..."

His sudden turn confused everyone. Tianming's words seemed to be ignored by Bai Yunfei as he disappeared into the crowd. Tianming stopped dead in his tracks to look back to Jing Mingfeng and the others, unsure of what to do.

"Brother Bai... is he not going to help those two? Shouldn't we... follow him then?" Tianming asked.

Tang Xinyun looked off to where Bai Yunfei disappeared to with furrowed eyebrows. There was a disappointed look on her face as she looked to the old and young pair. Soon a sympathetic look overcame her face. After biting her lower lip in indecision, she finally decided to walk over to them.

When they reached the youth, he started with fear and paranoia. As he subconsciously shrank away, he pursed up his lips, and his frail but determined body immediately moved to protect the elder woman behind him.

There was a pained look in Tang Xinyun's eyes at that sight, but she managed to give a small smile filled with warmth. "Little brother, don't be afraid. We won't harm you. We're here to help."

She then looked at the frail woman behind the youth, "Is that your grandmother?"

The youth seemed to loosen up just a bit when he saw the honest

goodwill behind Tang Xinyun's eyes. With some hesitation, he replied with a nod of his head, "Yes."

Giving it some thought, Tang Xinyun shook her right hand, and three gold pieces came out of her space ring. Handing them to the child, she said, "Take these coins. Your grandmother is very ill; take this to go buy medicine and have her eat it. She'll get better soon."

When she took out the three gold, Zhao Mancha looked as if she wanted to say something. However, she changed her mind when she saw the earnest look on Tang Xinyun's face. Thus, she closed her mouth.

"Xi-Xiao Hu, don't... don't take it..." A frail voice could be heard from behind the youth as the woman behind him struggled to speak.

"Ma'am, please don't decline it. Just take it. It'll help your future." Tang Xinyun spoke to the elder woman with the same warm-hearted smile.

Dazed, the youth took the gold pieces from her while seemingly ignoring the voice of his grandmother behind him. Taking the coins 'fiercely', he then stuffed them into his clothes so that no one else would see.

Falling to the ground with a 'plopping' sound, the child kowtowed his head to Tang Xinyun to give his thanks. Hurriedly moving to pick him up, Tang Xinyun shook her head, "Don't be like this. Hurry, go help your grandmother. You'll be able to take care of her with more care later, okay?"

For a few seconds, the young boy stared at Tang Xinyun as if trying to burn her image into his mind. He finally said with an honest voice, "Thank you!"

Revealing a happy smile, Tang Xinyun replied, "Haha, there's no need to thank me. This is something I should ha-"

“What are you all doing here?” Before she could even finish, a sound from behind interrupted her. Turning around, Tang Xinyun saw Bai Yunfei with two items in his hand as he stared at them curiously.

“Brother Bai? Didn’t you leave?” Tianming asked in befuddlement.

“Leave? Where would I go to?” Bai Yunfei was equally confused, but then a smile appeared on his face, “I only went to buy something, didn’t I tell you all to wait here for a second?”

“Where did you go? None of us heard you say anything.”

“Eh... forget about it. The crowd probably drowned out my words.” Bai Yunfei shook his head before walking to the young boy. He opened up one of the oil paper bags he was holding. Inside were several steaming-hot steamed buns for the young boy to eat.

“Have some to eat first. It’ll fill your stomach and give you energy to take care of your grandmother.” Bai Yunfei explained before handing the other bag over, “This is some medicine that is used to treat common illnesses. Find a place to boil it and then feed it to your grandmother.”

Seeing the vacant look on the youngster’s face, Bai Yunfei laughed before handing several copper coins strung together. Hiding them into the folds of the boy’s clothes, Bai Yunfei quietly said, “Take this money and take of your grandmother, got it?”

It was only at this point that the youngster realized what was happening. His reaction was even grander than when he had received the three gold coins. He put down the items he had been given before he immediately fell to the floor once more. He kowtowed his head thrice while saying with a quavering voice, “Thank you... thank you...”

Bai Yunfei did nothing to stop him, allowing him to finish his actions. Then helping up his grandmother, the two of them slowly

hobbled to the left side of the street before ultimately disappearing from sight. With the same smile on his face when he was talking to the child, Bai Yunfei addressed everyone, “Well now that everything is done, we should continue on our way.”

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With everyone continuing on the roads, not a single one of them were as happy as before. Instead, there were subdued looks on each one of their faces.

“Tianming, do you treat your grandmother with the same piety as that child?” Bai Yunfei suddenly asked Tianming.

“Wha? How could I? My home isn’t like that, and my grandmother has plenty of servants looking after her...”

“Then, when your grandmother is sick, do you take care of her?”

“Are-aren’t there other people for that? Even if I went, it’d be...”

“Do you ever attempt to have a conversation with her?”

“I...”

For a good while, Tianming was silent. Finally turning to tilt his head to Bai Yunfei, his next words were said in a low voice, “Brother Bai, I-I think I understand now...”

“Then all is well.” Bai Yunfei smiled. “When you go home, remember to treat your mother and grandmother with the piety they deserve. I can guarantee that if you do as you should, then life will be drastically different for you...”

“Got it!” Tianming nodded before a smile reappeared on his face. “Brother Bai, when you left back then, we all thought that you weren’t going to help those two! None of us thought that you’d come back with medicine and food!”

“Haha, when I saw them, there was no way I couldn’t help them. I could only give them what they need for now, but... their future is completely up to that kid. We can only help them temporarily,

but our money should help them for a few days or so. When he eats his fill, he should be able to find the energy to find a way to earn some money..."

Giving a small laugh, Tianming answered, "Yeah, before you came back, miss Xinyun had already given them three gold pieces! That should be enough for them to live for an even longer amount of time..."

Bai Yunfei felt so astounded at those words that he came to a standstill, "What did you say!?"

The abrupt reaction scared even Tianming. He was at a loss for words. "I...I said that miss Xinyun gave them three gold pieces. It should be enough for them for a while..."

Bai Yunfei's eyes immediately swiveled to look at Tang Xinyun.

"Yes? Mister Bai, did I... did I do something wrong?" Tang Xinyun was at a loss as well. She didn't understand what was happening.

Bai Yunfei's eyebrows narrowed together in anger before he turned to Zhao Mancha and Jing Mingfeng right next to her.

When Bai Yunfei looked to the two, both of them were unable to meet his gaze. They both shifted their eyes away, and on their faces was... embarrassment?

"Hmph!!"

Bai Yunfei let out a cold snort, but no words came out after that. It was with quick steps that Bai Yunfei started to walk in the direction where the child and his grandmother had headed.

"But... aunty Zhao, why is mister Bai acting this way? Was there a problem?" Tang Xinyun was completely bewildered by Bai Yunfei's reaction.

There was some hesitation on the older woman's face as she sighed. "Young miss... You'll understand in a moment if you

follow him..."

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Not even a minute passed before Bai Yunfei had reached one of the alleyways of the streets with great haste. With his soulsense spread out to track down the two, he started to comb the area for them.

A sudden movement caused his eyes to light up, but then his joy turned into fury the next moment. Frost entered his eyes briefly before his body flickered away. He headed down a narrow pathway with a gust of wind trailing behind him.

Within this alleyway, four fiendish men were kicking and punching at a small, frail figure. Several steamed buns and medicinal ingredients could be seen scattered around. An extremely frail-looking woman had been pushed to the side where her body was quivering nonstop, unable to move. It seemed like someone had forcefully pushed her down.

"Pl-please! Don't hit — don't hit him anymore. Xia — Xiao Hu, give them the money..." The woman let out a pleading whimper to their assailants. The young child hugged at his chest to prevent the coins from being taken.

"No! I won't give them up!" The young child was curled in a ball with his hands across his chest as if he was resolved to protect the coins to his death.

"What was that? You won't give them up? Then we'll beat you to death!" One of the men landed a vicious kick against the child's stomach while swearing at him, "You little beggar! Just a few copper coins would be enough for you. What use is there for gold coins!? You'd only buy some measly steamed buns and rotting vegetables! Don't be an idiot. Hand them over or we'll beat you to death and pry the coins from your dead body!"

The elderly woman finally managed to shift herself over to one of

the men. With a trembling hand, she held onto his trouser legs and began to beg. “Please — please don’t hurt him anymore. You’ll kill him! We’ll give you the money! We don’t need it! Please... don’t hurt him anymore...”

“Disgusting old crone, let go of me!” The man viciously glared at her. A single kick was enough to separate the two of them, but as if he was unsatisfied with just that, the man’s leg wound up for another kick as if he was unsatisfied.

“Hmph!”

A sneer suddenly made itself known. The next moment, the man suddenly felt a stinging pain originate from his leg. When he looked down, all he could see was a thumb-sized thing come flying out from the side of his leg, and what appeared to be blood flew off of it...

“Aah!!” It only took half a second for the man to suddenly come to his senses. He clutched at his bleeding right leg before collapsing to the ground. Before he could fall down, Bai Yunfei struck at his belly with a kick of his own. He sent the man flying ten meters away.

At the same time, three separate slamming sounds could be heard as the other three men were sent flying by Jing Mingfeng, who stood protectively over the young boy with a grim expression.

At the entrance of the alleyway, Tang Xinyun stood dumbfounded from start to finish. With how things were unfolding right in front of her, she had absolutely no idea how to react...

Chapter 125: Moonlight on the Rooftops

Bai Yunfei supported the elderly woman to her knees as he transmitted some of his soulforce into her to alleviate her pain. He turned to look at the four men struggling on the ground with sharp, frosty eyes, “Scram!!”

At a sudden loss of words, the four of them stared blankly for a moment before one of the less injured ones vehemently glared at Bai Yunfei. With a seemingly rehearsed line, he shouted, “Who are you! We are from the Eagle Gang...”

Before they could even finish speaking, a tremendous amount of soulforce pressed down onto them in an instant. The pressure was so intense that whatever words they wanted to say were forcibly stopped in their throats.

Killing intent began to leak from Bai Yunfei’s eyes as he icily said, “If you don’t leave this instant, I’ll kill you all!!”

All four of the men shivered in fear at the same time. Even the one that had a hole through his leg stopped screaming for that one moment. With a look at one another, they did not say anything more. They hobbled their way out of the alley.

Jing Mingfeng helped the youth, named Xiao Hu, back to his feet as well. With some soulforce to help the boy recover from his wounds, he was already starting to look a little better.

A soul cultivator could temporarily accept the soulforce of another to heal their wounds, but it would not last for long. If the affinities of the soulforces were at odds, then the recovery effect would backfire completely. However, if the average person accepted soulforce into their bodies, then it would stimulate their acupoints and help start their body’s recovery process.

As soon as Xiao Hu rose to his feet, he flew to his grandmother’s side with an anxious expression. Upon realizing that she had not

received any major injuries, he let out a great sigh of relief. He tilted his head to gratefully look at Bai Yunfei. “Thank you!”

Laughing, Bai Yunfei shook his head, “There’s no need to thank us. Instead, we were the ones that brought trouble to you in the first place...” As he spoke, Bai Yunfei’s eye swiveled to look beside him.

After a small moment of consideration, Bai Yunfei said to the boy, “Leaving you here would be dangerous. Who knows whether or not those men will come back for you. I can help you again, but are you willing to follow me?”

Stunned, Xiao Hu looked to his grandmother then back to Bai Yunfei in silence. Then, with a determined look, he nodded his head, “Okay!”

Smiling, Bai Yunfei cried out, “Tianming, come here!”

“Ah? Oh! Coming!” Tianming ran up to Bai Yunfei full of curiosity, “Brother Bai, what’s up?”

“Carry the grandmother and we’ll head back to find boss Huang.”

“Ah? That’s...” Tianming looked at the grimy and dusty clothes of the stinky woman with a look of hesitation.

“What’s wrong? Are you unwilling? Do you hate the filth of the elderly? Forget it then, I’ll do it.” Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes before moving to kneel down in preparation to carry the old woman.

Snapping out of his daze, Tianming revealed a look of guilt on his face as he panicked, “No no, that’s not it... Brother Bai, I admit my wrongs. Let me do it, please.”

Bai Yunfei stood back up with a smile as he watched Tianming carefully lift the woman onto his back. With a nod of his head to Xiao Hu and Jing Mingfeng, he said, “Let’s go then.”

There was a complicated expression on Tang Xinyun's face when she saw Bai Yunfei look at her earlier. When she saw the woman on Tianming's back and Xiao Hu right next to the two, her mouth opened as if trying to say something, but then she closed it as if unsure of what to say. Her eyes began to moisten and a guilty look overcame her face.

Seeing the state that she was in, Bai Yunfei shook his head and softly said, "You... had no bad intentions."

Then he looked to Zhao Mancha who was standing guiltily beside Tang Xinyun, "You, however, did wrong..."

Without any further words, they all turned to walk through the streets.

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When they arrived back at the Prosperity inn, Bai Yunfei noticed that Huang Wan and the others were already waiting for them. Several plates of food could be seen ready to be eaten, and even more people could be seen seated around the tables with smiles and laughs as they chatted. About half of them were strangers to Bai Yunfei, but they were most likely Huang Wan's business partners.

When Huang Wan saw Bai Yunfei and the others enter, he immediately flew over to receive them. Another stout but wealthy person had come over with him, but that person remained very respectful, albeit a little nervous. He must have learned Bai Yunfei's and the others' statuses from Huang Wan

The two of them exchanged several words of greeting with the group before Bai Yunfei mentioned Xiao Hu and his grandmother. He hoped that Xiao Hu would be able to find work with Huang Wan in exchange for several necessities.

Bai Yunfei made sure to note that neither Xiao Hu or he knew each other; therefore, no special considerations should be made. Xiao Hu would be treated as any regular person. As it was nothing

but a small matter to a person like Huang Wan, he full-heartedly agreed to the request. He was more than aware that Xiao Hu and Bai Yunfei had experienced a chance encounter and that it was almost impossible for them to meet again, but the fact that he was connected to a soul cultivator was a good selling point. Even if it was a small exchange, agreeing to Bai Yunfei would serve as an honor and as ‘capital’....

That night, Bai Yunfei rested upon an impressive-looking bed, but instead of cultivating, Bai Yunfei was resting his head on his hands while he reminisced on several things.

At the moment, Bai Yunfei was thinking back to how the rich merchant Huang Wan was always giving him looks of admiration and worship. Then he thought to the young boy and his grandmother he helped save from the gang of hoodlums. Then at last, he thought back to how words could irrevocably change his ‘destiny.’ However, for some reason, there was a ‘melancholic’ spirit to him.

He himself was now a mighty soul cultivator, no longer a commoner that had to swallow his anger whenever he was berated with insults.

“One day, there will be a time when my little Yunfei will be like the clouds in the sky, floating across the azure sky with complete freedom.”

The sweet and endearing words of his mother floated into his ear. Then Bai Yunfei’s right arm rose in front of his face and his palm faced the ceiling. “Mother, I’ve become someone with more strength than the average person. I can do so much more now. I can even do the things I could only dream of before. It has been a relaxed life ever since... is this the ‘freedom’ you talked about?”

“But...” Bai Yunfei thought back to his previous grievances with the Glacial School and then how he had been chased by a Soul Ancestor in Yanlin City. It had only been by the assistance of

another that he managed to escape with his life.

“Perhaps this is only temporary... the world is big, and I can only ‘fly freely’ for a small amount of time. Life goes on for even longer than that. Even if I bother no one, there is no guarantee that trouble won’t come after me. There’s plenty of people stronger than me in the world, and if I want to continue living my life with this ‘freedom,’ then I just have to get stronger!

“Furthermore... it’s not like I’m being forced into this. Mother, I feel that growing stronger is a thing to be happy about; it’s not a burden at all. I’ve taken plenty of risks with soul cultivators, soul skills, soul armaments, soulbeasts, schools, and even the Upgrade Technique... I feel that there’s still so much more for me to discover. A lifestyle like this is something that is to my liking... Mother, please don’t worry about me anymore. Your child will continue to live in freedom and in peace. I won’t disappoint you...”

The more he thought, the more he began to think about the hazy memories of his mother and the he more he thought about the bits and pieces memories he retained of his grandfather. His line of thought was so quick that by the end of it all, Bai Yunfei was unable to sleep in peace or cultivate.

With nothing else to do, Bai Yunfei let out a small sigh and hopped down from his bed. Opening the windows, he leaped out, prepared to stroll around.

“Eh?” As soon as he landed on the streets, Bai Yunfei let out a small sound of surprise. He then turned his head to look at the roof. Someone was sitting on top of it...

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A figure wearing white robes could be seen sitting on the roof. Her head faced toward the bright moon that hung in the sky. Her eyes were fogged over as if thinking about something. Xiao Bai was on her shoulder and would occasionally hop around, chirping to console the person.

The pitter-patter sounds of footsteps caused Tang Xinyun to be alarmed for a moment, but she quickly regained her calm as she gave a nod to Bai Yunfei down below. Bringing her head back up to look at the night sky, Tang Xinyun now looked even more gloomy than before.

“What’s wrong? Miss Tang, what could you be thinking about this late at night?” Bai Yunfei hopped on over to a meter away from Tang Xinyun as he asked.

For a brief moment, Tang Xinyun hesitated when she looked to Bai Yunfei. Then giving a light nod of her head, she opened her mouth to say. “I... mister Bai, I wanted to thank you, and I wanted... to say sorry...”

“Haha, what are you thanking me for? Your apologies aren’t needed either.” Bai Yunfei smiled as he shook his head. “You did nothing wrong, miss Tang. Don’t think too much about today’s events...”

“How did I do nothing wrong? Because of my actions, that kid and his grandmother were accosted by those hoodlums. If I didn’t give them those gold coins, then this wouldn’t have happened in the first place...” Drooping her head, she continued with guilt creeping in onto her voice, “But... I really thought I was helping them. I never once thought that something like that would happen...”

“Now that I think about it, whenever I did this in the past, aunty Zhao would always find an excuse to leave me for a moment. I can see it now... she was helping me with the ‘aftermath’ of my actions...” Tang Xinyun shook her head, “And to think I was so naive to believe that I was helping them live a better life. This is the price of my self-satisfaction I suppose...”

“Aunty Zhao was only protecting your innocence and goodwill...” Bai Yunfei tried to console her.

Tang Xinyun gave a bitter laugh, “I know that. I know that aunty

Zhao always acts in my best interest. Even back home, she was like this. Even now, she remains the same... in the past, I thought I knew everything, but now I realize that I don't know anything about the outside world at all."

"Aren't you learning how it works now? The more you learn, the more you understand. That's what it means to travel, is it not? In the future, when you think back on these mistakes, you will cherish them as lessons you learned from."

Bai Yunfei had no idea how to console Tang Xinyun, so when he saw that she was still gloomy, he tried to change the subject. "Ah, miss Tang, I never got the chance to ask you. Why did want to travel the outside world anyways?"

Bai Yunfei had tried to change the subject to distract Tang Xinyun from her depression; however, he didn't expect to see her fall even deeper into her depression after the question was asked.

"I... wanted to get stronger. I want to become so strong that even my family won't be able to ignore me. I want to be able to protect my mother from any harm with my own two hands..." Tang Xinyun whispered nearly unhearable after a period of silence.

Bai Yunfei grew silent after listening to her speak. Sighing, he responded, "Miss Tang, you shouldn't be depressed like this. For the sake of your mother, you must smile, even if there is a lot to shoulder. Your mother would want you to be happy, and I'm sure that you being happy would be the greatest desire of hers..."

"I too would want to become stronger to protect my mother. Even if it meant working to exhaustion and suffering all there is to suffer, I would be willing, but alas, I no longer have the chance for that..."

Bai Yunfei had originally started out as the one comforting Tang Xinyun, but, all of a sudden, her depression had spread to him. Such a reversal had caused Tang Xinyun to be surprised. For a short while, the scenery on the rooftop had descended into a

temporary stillness.

Chapter 126: An Indescribable Attack

Bai Yunfei had originally started out as the one comforting Tang Xinyun, but, all of a sudden, her depression had spread to him. Such a reversal had caused Tang Xinyun to be surprised. For a short while, the scenery on the rooftop had descended into a temporary stillness.

“Mister Bai, your mother...” Tang Xinyun’s voice dispelled the silence that had befallen the two.

“My mother passed away when I was only nine years old. Later, my grandfather, the remaining person in my life who relied on me and I on them, passed away as well. With only myself to rely upon, I had to work in a meager rice shop and move rice bags for my food...” Bai Yunfei’s voice was silent for a while, but with time, it grew stronger and stronger. When he saw the confused expression on Tang Xinyun’s face, he gave a small smile, and continued on with his sentence, “Later on, I happened upon a meeting of fortune that helped me become who I am today.

“My mother had once said that she hoped that there would be a day where I would become like the clouds in the sky. Absolute freedom to move when I pleased and where I pleased.” Tilting his head to stare at the ink-stained night as if trying to see through the endless darkness to watch the clouds beyond, Bai Yunfei smiled. “Today I stand, not only with power, but with freedom. Having both of which what my mother wanted, I left the home I grew up in to wander the world. With that freedom, I found reason to my life while also accomplishing what my mother wanted for me...”

“Yes, I believe that you’ll be able to accomplish anything you set your mind to. You’re a strong person with honor. In the future, you’ll definitely be able to walk the continent as if anything under the sky is yours.” Tang Xinyun nodded her head with a smile.

“Yeah...” Bai Yunfei replied full of melancholy. His eyes widened

with realization as if something had just hit him. Scratching his cheek in embarrassment, he said, “Er... I thought I was supposed to be consoling you. How did it become the other way?”

Tang Xinyun couldn’t help but let out a quick giggle. She smiled when she saw the embarrassment on Bai Yunfei’s face. Bai Yunfei was a character that was an unfathomable mystery to her, but she had felt that his actions were not a waste of energy at all.

The atmosphere on the rooftop seemed to have started to liven up by just a subtle amount.

“Miss Tang, you...”

“Ahem!!”

Bai Yunfei had been thinking about the best time to ask Tang Xinyun just where she was planning to go next. When he was finally about to open his mouth to ask, a sudden coughing sound had broken the silence, startling him. Looking rather embarrassed, Bai Yunfei turned his head to look down at Zhao Mancha who had seemingly appeared from nowhere.

He said nothing out loud, but in his heart, Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but remark, “Aunty, couldn’t you have stayed there in the darkness just a little longer? Why do you have to be like the cold wind that has to interrupt the atmosphere here?”

At the same time that this woman had let out a cough to alert the two to her presence, Bai Yunfei could just barely hear two sighs of regret below his feet. It appeared that Jing Mingfeng and Tianming had both felt that aunty Zhao’s appearance was a very untimely one as well.

A wave of annoyance overcame Bai Yunfei, causing him to crease his forehead together...

“Young miss, it’s time to sleep. We have to wake up early tomorrow to get a move on.” The woman gave a look at Bai Yunfei for a slight moment before speaking to Tang Xinyun.

“Yes.” Tang Xinyun gave a noncommittal sound of agreement in response. Giving a slight nod of her head to Bai Yunfei, she rose up to prepare herself to follow aunty Zhao back to their room.

“Miss Tang, will you really not be traveling with us any more? We are heading in the same direction, it would be nice to have everyone travel together.” Bai Yunfei spoke to her after thinking of the right words to say.

“There’s no need. Tan Xinyun and I have matters to attend to. That would mean we have no time to travel slowly with you, mister Bai.” Tang Xinyun was not the one who replied. Instead Aunty Zhao was the one who rejected Bai Yunfei’s offer to travel together. Even now, she was very unwilling to allow the young miss of her family to travel with this group. She wished to separate from the group at the earliest convenience. Tang Xinyun had changed plenty in their time with Bai Yunfei and the others. While aunty Zhao couldn’t say that all these changes were bad, she still felt that the dangers and risks that came with traveling with them outweighed the good changes. For the sake of keeping Tang Xinyun safe, the older woman wanted to rush ahead to their destination with post haste.

Bai Yunfei watched as Tang Xinyun and Zhao Mancha disappear underneath the balcony without another word. Having nothing to say, he could only shake his head. He chose to stay on the roof just a little longer to observe the sky. He thought for a little longer before coming to some sort of conclusion. Finally stepping down from the roof, he walked back to his own room...

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Shortly after eating breakfast the next morning, Zhao Mancha hailed a carriage from the city for her and Tang Xinyun. With a brief farewell to everyone, she and Tang Xinyun drove from Guyi City, headed to the north.

Bai Yunfei, Jing Mingfeng, and Tianming, on the other hand,

spent the day strolling around the city, buying whatever tickled their fancy. For two days, they remained in Guyi City. On the morning of the third day, the three of them set out for Gaoyi City at last.

As for Xiao Hu and his grandmother, the two of them were now traveling with Huang Wan and the others back to Yanlin City.

.....

From the very beginning of when they left Guyi City, Bai Yunfei and the other two felt very relaxed. They traveled and stopped as they pleased and took the time to explore every small city or village that they happened upon. As per usual, Tianming and Jing Mingfeng were as inseparable as shadows. The two of them had formed an extremely close friendship, and Bai Yunfei was startled to realize that Jing Mingfeng had even handed over the Disguise Technique over to Tianming.

At the same time, Jing Mingfeng had taught Tianming the art of stealing for a cause. In the very beginning, Tianming had tried his hand on Bai Yunfei, but each and every attempt ended with him being caught and roughed up a bit as a lesson. Facing only failures whenever he tried to test Bai Yunfei, Tianming had no other choice but to switch targets. Every single time they reached an area with a decent amount of people, Tianming stole from the hoodlums or the hedonistic children of so-and-so family. At the same time, the people who were living in destitution would always find their coin purses suddenly feeling heavier than before...

Jing Mingfeng and Tianming both relished this pattern of ‘stealing from the rich and helping the poor,’ causing Bai Yunfei to feel worried for the two. However, the two of them had not been too reckless in their behaviors. Jing Mingfeng himself knew when to judge the time to be proper or improper, so Bai Yunfei felt disinclined to stop them. From time to time, however, Bai Yunfei would scold Jing Mingfeng for corrupting Tianming — a high and mighty soul cultivator that stole money? It was truly an absurd

thought.

Whenever Bai Yunfei inquired to Jing Mingfeng on why he was so committed to stealing like this, Jing Mingfeng would reply to him in embarrassment, “Honestly, being a noble thief is my side job.”

He had explained that when stealing, he would never hurt the person he stole from. When he stole something that was important to the owner and not important to him, Jing Mingfeng would return it so as to not let it weigh on his conscious; thus, he was a ‘noble thief’. Whatever his main job was, he never mentioned it to either of the two.

Three days later, Bai Yunfei was suddenly thrust upon a difficult decision — should he agree to Jing Mingfeng’s and Tianming’s idea of taking a shortcut through the forests?

In his mind, this course of action was rather unnecessary. There was no need to hurry to where they wanted to go, so traveling on the main paths would be fine. Jing Mingfeng and Tianming didn’t think the same. They had both heard from a nearby small village that the forests had plenty of never before seen soulbeasts, so their eyes were practically beaming at the prospects of finding one.

The fact that Tang Xinyun had managed to make a partner out of the Quickshade Bird had been a major influence on the two of them. Jing Mingfeng had especially vowed that he would find a strong soulbeast with the wind affinity and make it his soulbeast companion.

Jing Mingfeng and Tianming had managed to procure a map of the forest, and after studying the layout for a very long time, the group finally decided on taking the shortcut through the forest on the grounds that it would save them three days worth of travel. The fact that there may be a soulbeast for them and that it would shave off three days, Bai Yunfei had finally resigned himself to their proposal.

For two days and two nights, the group of three trekked through the forests. From start to end, they had not seen a single soulbeast — not even a single strand of hair from one. On the other hand, there were all sorts of regular wild animals. Jing Mingfeng and Tianming, who had both been excited at first, had become extremely disappointed by the results.

By the time they made it back to the main roads, their remaining travel time had been reduced by a decent amount. Bai Yunfei himself had let out a sigh of relief. He had been glad that they had not gotten lost as he was afraid they might have.

Another three days later in the afternoon, they finally happened upon a tea stop.

With the three of them seated at the same table, Bai Yunfei was happy to order a cup of tea to drink. They wound down and watched the other travelers walk by. Tianming mentioned that it wasn't too far until they reached Gaoyi City. As long as they press on without any more hindrances, they should be able to reach his home in the city by night time.

Continuing on their way, the group reached a small mountain this time. Tianming suggested once more that they could take a shortcut over it to save some time. If they did take this shortcut, then it might be possible to get to the city before nightfall. This time, Bai Yunfei was more than willing to agree. Hiking a mountain to get to the other side shouldn't be a cause for concern at all...

As soon as they scaled the mountain to the very top, the three males were able to see a city off in the distance. Although it wasn't as grandiose as Yanlin City, it was still a city with a considerable amount of charm and grace. The first thing that had to be noted were the four giant buildings that stood at the corners of the city. According to Tianming, one of the four buildings was home to the lord of the city while the other three corners belonged to the house of Liu, Ye, and Zhao. The building to the southwest of the city was

the house of Ye.

Upon seeing his home, Tianming seemed to look a little more excited than before. Letting out two loud whoops in excitement, he whirled around to shout to his two companions, “Brother Bai, brother Jing! Let’s hurry! Maybe we’ll make it back home before dinner!”

“Tianming, didn’t you sneak out of your home? Aren’t you afraid of being punished by your family?” Jing Mingfeng asked when he noted that Tianming was unafraid of the prospect of returning home.

“Not at all! It’s a small matter really. I’ve done this in the past too. Though, in comparison, this trip took a little longer than usual. I’ll just be scolded by my father a bit, but my mother and grandmother won’t let him hurt me. Hehe...” Tianming waved a hand in a carefree manner.

Having said that, he began to run down the mountain while also waving to Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng.

As soon as Bai Yunfei was about to lift his foot to start walking, a sudden glint of surprise flashed through his eyes. Adding even more weight to his foot to run even faster, Bai Yunfei began to use the Wave Treading Steps to chase down Tianming with as much speed as he could muster. “Tianming! Get back!” He cried out a warning to him.

Just ten meters away, the thing that had alerted Bai Yunfei was a black rope-like object that had suddenly shot at Tianming from the forest to his left. Before Bai Yunfei could even reach Tianming, the black rope had already coiled around Tianming’s neck.

At first glance, the object looked rather similar to the Compliant Rope, but when given a second glance, one would realize that this was no rope. It was actually a ten meter long snake!

Tianming was weak. However, his reaction time was still beyond

what the normal person was capable of or perhaps it was because of his faith in Bai Yunfei, but when he heard the two words, ‘get back,’ Tianming didn’t even look to the snake coming at him from the left. Instead, he pushed off with his foot to jump back. He was barely able to escape danger because of this trust.

This black snake barely grazed his neck as it passed by, but with a twist of its body, the snake bent at a right angle to come flying back at him!

Chapter 127: The House of Zhao, and the....Beast Taming School Again?

After the snake missed its first initial strike, it contorted its body so that it came flying back to coil around Tianming!

The speed of the snake was fast enough for Tianming to be left unable to dodge again. However, Bai Yunfei had reached him by then; reaching out with his left hand, Bai Yunfei yanked the robes of Tianming's clothes to pull him back. At the same time, his right hand swung to punch the snake on the head with a 'pop.'

As soon as Bai Yunfei had pulled Tianming behind him, he and Jing Mingfeng carefully looked around the situation with vigilant glares.

While they were rescuing Tianming, a slight sound of surprise was heard from the left side of the forest where the snake came from. Slithering sounds from all around them could be heard before five figures came walking out. Among these five was a middle-aged man wearing rich purple robes and another man wearing gray robes. By their sides were soulbeasts that had vacant pupils on their faces.

"Beast Taming School!!"

Bai Yunfei's heart skipped a beat as the hatred he had for the Beast Taming School from the last incident with the quickshade bird came flying back to him.

"Caretaker Zhao!!"

A startled cry interrupted Bai Yunfei's train of thought as Tianming had finally taken note of their ambushers.

"Tianming, do you know them?" Bai Yunfei stared down the man with luxurious looking robes and a 'kind' smile on his face. This was a man that exuded the aura of a mid-stage Soul Sprite without a doubt.

“He’s the caretaker of one of the three major families in Gaoyi City, Zhao Chuan! Even though he’s only the caretaker, he’s practically the second ruler of the household — even the head of the house, Zhao Ling, is barely stronger than him! The majority of the internal affairs are usually up to him to handle as well. I know that he’s a mid-stage Soul Sprite and has the lightning affinity as well.”

“The house of Zhao... was there some sort of quarrel between your house and his?” Jing Mingfeng looked at the group of people in front of him vigilantly as he asked Tianming.

“Of course there’s been some bad blood between us, but there has never been any conflict like this. Something like this... this is a first!” Tianming replied. He was more than aware of their plans as well, but he still had to ask himself, “Did... did something happen in the few months I was away?”

A look of panic crossed Tianming’s face. He was clearly worried for his family.

“I can understand the house of Zhao coming after you, but why is the Beast Taming School participating in this too?” Jing Mingfeng’s eyes stared at the soulbeasts in front of them with confusion.

Tianming shook his head in confusion, “I... I don’t know that either. Aside from the house of Liu, who have connections with the Wood School, the house of Ye and the house of Zhao don’t have any affiliations with any other school.”

“Bahaha, little Tianming, you couldn’t possibly guess the reason even if you tried. It wasn’t in my expectations to see your friends be this strong. That was a mistake on my own part, but this changes nothing. I’ve come here today to welcome and receive you back to the house of Zhao for a few days. It goes without saying that I am rather unwilling to harm you, and if you cooperate with us, then your friends won’t be hurt either.” The caretaker smiled

as he held his hand to stop the two men to his side.

Bai Yunfei had been silent during this brief exchange, so he could carefully ponder the situation. After a while, it was Tianming who voiced his thoughts, “In other words, there is now an open conflict between both houses, and you wish to make use of me as a hostage to use against the house of Ye? If we don’t cooperate, then you will, of course, adopt a more forceful approach and possibly harm or even kill my friends?”

Tianming was young, but he wasn’t stupid. The sudden development of the situation had only required a snap judgement to realize the reality of what was happening. Staring down the caretaker, Tianming questioned, “Are you not afraid of bringing the wrath of the lord of Gaoyi City onto your heads for this blatant attack? Are you also not afraid of suffering from his hand? What has happened to the house of Ye?”

“Little Tianming, you’ve been away for far too long I’m afraid. It’s only natural that you wouldn’t know about the happenings of Gaoyi City. Just wait until we get back home to the house of Zhao. I’ll be more than happy to tell you every single little bit of detail you want... now, how about it? Shall we be on our way, little Tianming?” The caretaker continued to smile at the three with the air of a businessman.

Even now, Bai Yunfei remained silent as he continued to analyze the situation. “This caretaker is a mid-stage Soul Sprite, and the three people by his side are late-stage Soul Warriors. The most important matter is that middle-aged man right next to the caretaker; he is a middle-grade Soul Sprite. A stronger one than the caretaker! Two tiger soulbeasts, a wolf soulbeast, and a snake soulbeast; there’s no way that this snake will be a weak one either... why is it that I see the Beast Taming School anywhere I go? Even if the physical body is gone, the spirit remains I guess...”

“Hmph, don’t even think that—” Tianming snorted just before Bai Yunfei suddenly realized the change in the situation and leaped

back with Tianming in tow. Simultaneously, four wriggling tree-root-like objects suddenly flew out in an attempt to coil around their legs from where they stood.

Seeing that their ambush had failed once again, the man from the Beast Taming School waved at Zhao Chuan to stop him from talking, “Quit the chatter. It’s time to take action!”

His voice was the catalyst for the three Soul Warriors to suddenly fly back. With hardened expressions and a faint trill coming from their lips, the three of them waved their right hands out for a command. The soulbeasts right next to them gave a low roar before leaping into the air to chase down Bai Yunfei and the other two.

Even Zhao Chuan had narrowed his eyes as he barked out, “Fine! Capture the kid, but kill the other two!”

A halo of purple light enveloped his body as he spoke, and in the next movement of his leg, the man had disappeared from sight with a speed faster than even the three soulbeasts. In the next instant, he had appeared in front of Tianming with a hand outstretched to grab his neck.

“Fast!!” Bai Yunfei felt extremely alarmed at this speed. This was the very first time he had encountered someone with the lightning affinity. A soul cultivator with this affinity was extremely fast in short bursts, and had a powerful attack power to follow it up with. This was not the only advantage they possessed; soul cultivators with the water, ice, or metal affinity would not be a good match up against them.

Even though he was startled by his speed, Bai Yunfei hadn’t dared to fall behind either. With a twist of his foot, Bai Yunfei flew in front of Tianming as well. With his left arm moving up to brush away the hand aimed at Tianming, his right hand formed a fist to punch at Zhao Chuan’s chest.

Zhao Chuan had predicted that Bai Yunfei would move in this

fashion. He brought his right arm up to defend himself. In the next second, his right hand lashed out, and with a ‘bang’, the two of them separated half a step.

The sound of wind crackling with movement could be heard a short moment later as the two tigers pounced at them. Jing Mingfeng pulled Tianming to the left while Bai Yunfei was forced by Zhao Chuan’s kick to the right.

As soon as the three soulbeasts landed on the ground, they diverted their energy to turn toward Jing Mingfeng and Tianming. The three soulbeasts were third class soulbeasts. Jing Mingfeng could take all three of them on and then the three beast tamers behind them without much difficulty, but doing so while protecting Tianming would be a whole different problem.

Bai Yunfei wanted to help the two, but in that one moment of distraction, Zhao Chuan had managed to slam his palm into Bai Yunfei’s left shoulder. A wave of electricity had coursed into his body and numbed it before he delivered yet another punch to Bai Yunfei’s chest. However, he hadn’t been too injured by the attack because of the Goldsilk Soul Armor. The wave of paralysis had cleared away, allowing him to stand up.

Just as Bai Yunfei was trying to think of some way to help protect Tianming, a startled cry emerged from the person in question. Casting a quick glance to see what had happened, Bai Yunfei realized that Jing Mingfeng and Tianming had been forcibly divided. Jing Mingfeng had kicked away a gray wolf in an attempt to clear the path as he reached for Tianming, but then a black line suddenly darted from the bush. It was the same snake from before! Coiling around Tianming’s leg, it climbed up his leg and immediately sank its fangs into his arm!

Tianming’s body was as stiff as a board while his face turned flush red. His mouth opened to say something, but no sound came out. Ultimately, his eyes fluttered closed, and as if his strings were cut, Tianming’s body fell to the floor. The snake remained coiled

around Tianming's body as it started to drag his body away to the other side.

“Tianming!!”

Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng cried out in alarm at this sudden development. Just as Bai Yunfei moved to take out his Compliant Rope, a flash of purple light burst toward him from the side. Zhao Chuan appeared seemingly out of nowhere with a malicious glint in his eye. A small curved blade (shaped like a watermelon knife) about three fingers wide was in his hands. While Bai Yunfei had been distracted, he took this opportunity to strike!

Surprised, Bai Yunfei could only try to move his left arm out of the way so that the short blade swiped across his waist. The clothes he had been wearing were ripped apart, but the Goldsilk Soul Armor he wore underneath was able to take the blow with only a series of spark to indicate a collision had happened.

“Ol’ Bai!” Jing Mingfeng had struck down the two tigers with a single blow before leaping out of the way from the two tree roots that moved to entangle his feet. Eying Tianming being dragged into the forest, Jing Mingfeng let out a cry to Bai Yunfei as if trying to ask what they were to do now.

A cold light appeared in Bai Yunfei’s eyes as his anger rose, “Kill!!”

Bai Yunfei wasn’t one that liked to kill people, and thus, wanted to run away given the opportunity to. The situation now no longer allowed that plan of action due to Tianming being captured. Since these enemies were clearly trying to kill Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng, there was obviously no good will left between the two sides. Bai Yunfei no longer possessed the opportunity to be as kind as before. He would remove the emotions of his heart and kill his opponent.

All that was left for the house of Zhao and the Beast Taming School was death! If these two were not killed, then Bai Yunfei and

Jing Mingfeng would be killed in the future! This was all there was to it!

Jing Mingfeng's eyes lit up in recognition of the word that came from Bai Yunfei's mouth. His right foot stomped on the ground as he charged toward one of the tigers. Borrowing its head as a foot stool, he leaped three to four meters into the air with a burst of azure light accompanying him. His right hand blurred through the air before a black dagger appeared in it. His right arm streaked through the air. As it came flying down, a two-meter long blade of wind came shrieking forth toward one of the beast tamers.

The beast tamer that had been controlling the giant wolf had been sneering when it looked like Jing Mingfeng would not be retaliating against them. However, when Jing Mingfeng had flown into the air and unleashed a fierce counterblow, he had let out a yelp and commanded the beast to come back and protect him. With a snarl, the wolf flew into the air from the side. It took the blade of wind in substitution of its master.

During that moment, the beast tamer had been congratulating himself on his quick reaction. However, Jing Mingfeng's eyes had hardened again before he unleashed another blade of wind from his dagger, "Scatter!" He barked.

During the battle when Jing Mingfeng was fighting to protect the quickshade bird, his blade of wind had transformed into a form suitable for fighting. This time, this blade of wind had not turned into a net, but, instead, a single giant blade of wind that instantly exploded into a storm of miniature blades of wind!!

The beast tamer had no time to dodge the explosion of wind blades coming from Jing Mingfeng. With a series of slashing sounds, his body was cut into at every angle and area. Those previously happy eyes turned to shock, but even that shock slowly drained away to reveal a lifeless look. His body fell to the ground with a 'plop,' and he moved no more. The wolf he had been controlling came to a screeching halt as well, like a puppet that had

suddenly lost contact with the puppeteer that was controlling it.

Jing Mingfeng had killed a man in a single instant just like that, and on the other side, another completely unexpected situation was happening simultaneously!

Chapter 128: Instakill!

Jing Mingfeng may have killed someone in an instant, but what was happening on the other side was far more unexpected!

The very moment Bai Yunfei had cried out the word ‘kill’, his character had completely transformed. Following a brilliant explosion of sparks, Zhao Chuan’s eyes revealed his alarm. Bai Yunfei’s right arm shook once to intercept the blade that was coming at it.

“Clank!” The human tier weapon that had been in Zhao Chuan’s hand was blocked by the Flameblade Bracer. A wave of feedback coursed through Zhao Chuan’s right arm, but before he could follow up with anything else, Bai Yunfei had already stepped forward with his right arm. He slamming straight into Zhao Chuan’s chest!

Ninefold Fist Force!!

“Bang!” Rather than the chest, Bai Yunfei’s fist had slammed against the left palm in front of it, forcing Zhao Chuan to stagger back once more.

Zhao Chuan was stunned by the entire confrontation. He did not expect to see his opponent, who had been blindly defending just a moment before, to suddenly shift gears to retaliate so fiercely against him. With just two moves, he had been sent staggering back. All he could do was swap his dagger for another one and circulate his soulforce to prepare himself to defend, but as he brought his head up to look at his opponent, there was no one to be seen.

Bai Yunfei simply had no intentions of following with another move after the Ninefold Fist Force. As soon as he landed the blow against Zhao Chuan, he made an impromptu turn without even a glance to see what Zhao Chuan might do next. Pushing off, Bai Yunfei disappeared in an instant. He charged toward the mid-stage

Soul Sprite beast tamer!

This man hadn't been participating in the battle from the very beginning. Instead, he had waved his left hand like a baton, controlling the snake to capture Tianming. Bai Yunfei used his Wave Treading Steps to maximize his speed as he flew toward the man with a single pounce.

The sudden appearance of Bai Yunfei initially alarmed the man, but when he saw that Bai Yunfei had elected to leap at him, the man regained his wits and cruelly smiled. Following a wave of his right hand, a 'black cloud' appeared out of nowhere in front of him. He had summoned an entire hive of gray bees!

Pointing his right finger at Bai Yunfei, the beast tamer commanded the six or seven hundred bees to charge at him with the power of a whirlwind!

These Tree Wasps were merely second class in strength, but with the cumulative strength of six hundred under the control of a Soul Sprite, their strength would be tripled! The beast tamer had to laugh at Bai Yunfei's folly, for there was no where to dodge in the air! In his eyes, Bai Yunfei had no possible way of dodging and would therefore be stung to death by these wasps. Without a single chance of escape, the only thing that would be landing on the ground would be a dead corpse!

"Pah! I'll give him some credit for being a mid-stage Soul Sprite at such a tender young age, but what a shame that he lacks combat experience! A foolish action like this really do—" The beast tamer had felt a moment of elation in his heart when he saw the wasps approach Bai Yunfei, but the next moment, what he saw caused him to pause mid-thought in complete astonishment.

Bai Yunfei had not looked panicked at all despite being surrounded by these wasps. His right arm stretched out so that a wave of elemental fire gathered around it, and with a single thought, he cried out, "Winged Flame Blade!"

“Bang!”

A single wave of fire extended from his forearm as it simultaneously increased the temperature around him by a sweltering amount. A single blade of fire about two meters long materialized around Bai Yunfei’s waist in the next moment. It rotated around him in a protective ring. As if it was in orbit, the blade of fire sliced and diced at every single wasp that drew near!

The sounds of sizzling could be heard as the frontmost wasps began to catch fire after being cut. Then, as if like tinder to the flames, the fire spread to the rest of the wasps. It only took the blink of an eye before nearly seventy-percent of the wasps had been burned to death! All that were left were around a hundred bees that floated around the beast tamer’s head, like some sort of instinctual fear had stopped them, not a single bee inched toward Bai Yunfei.

But! Bai Yunfei’s counterattack was not finished yet!

The blade of fire had only been storing up power when it rotated around Bai Yunfei. As soon as Bai Yunfei had readied himself to strike down the beast tamer, the blade of fire above his forearm had grown yet another meter. A blaze of fire big enough to cut down the man!!

Three seconds hadn’t even passed from the moment the man had set the hive of wasps on Bai Yunfei, to the moment where Bai Yunfei was coming at him with a blade of fire after destroying the hive!

Fast — it had been far too fast! The man had absolutely no idea that Bai Yunfei would be capable of such a terrifying attack! There was simply no time to dodge, and no place to even do so! All that was left was for him to bring up his arms in hopes that he could protect himself from the blade...

“Bang!!”

When the blade of fire impacted against the ground, a series of cracks four fingers wide split across the floor. A brilliant spark of fire dazzled the eyes so that not a single person was able to see just how the beast tamer fared.

Landing gracefully on the ground, Bai Yunfei waved his right arm to recall the blade of fire back to him. Circling around it, the blade of fire made a series of rotations before being siphoned back into the bracer on Bai Yunfei's arm.

From where the beast tamer once stood, not a single figure was left but pile of ashes...

Instakill!!

A mid-stage Soul Sprite hadn't even had enough time to show off his full power before Bai Yunfei had turned him into a pile of dust!

This was the tremendous effect of a +12 item!!

It had been the second time Bai Yunfei had revealed this move. The first time had been against that gold-mask wearing Soul Ancestor that had been chasing him back in Stonegroove City! The difference in strength between that man and this beast tamer was massive, but even the Soul Ancestor had not escaped unscathed! Against a man of equal strength to him, the Winged Flame Blade had instantly killed him!

This was an unprecedented and unexpected situation even to Bai Yunfei. The entire area seemed to stop. Time seemed to have ceased to flow as well...

Zhao Chuan, a mere twenty meters away, had initially planned on striking at Bai Yunfei when he was fighting the beast tamer. Even he paused in his movements to stare blankly at the pile of ashes that was slowly scattering with the wind...

So much was the shock of the two other beast tamers that they hadn't even realized the stunning move Jing Mingfeng had performed. The both of them stared terrified at Bai Yunfei with

their minds completely blank. Neither of the two had thought that the Soul Sprite captain of theirs would be killed by Bai Yunfei without even enough time to let out a scream.

Even Jing Mingfeng had witnessed the spark of fire out of the corner of his eye. He stared at the bizarre halo of fire around Bai Yunfei's right arm.

"Whoosh!" As the final wisp of fire was absorbed back into the Flameblade Bracer with just a small rustling sound, Bai Yunfei gave his right arm a shake to test to see just how much of the elemental fire had been recalled to him. There was a surprisingly small loss of the elemental fire. However, he didn't even feel exhausted at all after the move.

Violently turning around, Bai Yunfei looked to Zhao Chuan. It seemed like time restarted once more the moment Bai Yunfei turned around. Zhao Chuan's eyes dilated when he saw Bai Yunfei look at him, and without any hesitation, he leaped back. He felt that if he was any slower, he would end up like the beast tamer, reduced to a pile of ashes.

At the same time as Zhao Chuan was retreating, Bai Yunfei moved into action. His right arm shook to reveal the Fire-tipped Spear that moved to strike down Zhao Chuan. "Kill every single one!" Bai Yunfei cried out.

Jing Mingfeng moved into action as well by then. Flying toward the two beast tamers that had been controlling the two tigers, he made use of their distraction to strike. These two men of the Beast Tamer School were weaker than a soul cultivator of the same level once split apart from their soulbeasts. With Jing Mingfeng being a whole level higher than them, they stood absolutely no chance.

Like a swift gale of wind, Jing Mingfeng struck down the two beast tamers. Blood poured out from their necks as they fell to the ground. As their eyes dimmed of light, they too lost the ability to live.

The last Soul Warrior had already recalled his soulbeast to him. He made one last final attempt to run away while his soulbeast came snapping at Jing Mingfeng as if it had gone insane.

“Tzzzk!”

A single gust of wind could be heard followed by yet another sound. The beast tamer’s body grew rigid, and his mouth dropped open in alarm. He too fell to the ground with his eyes vacant and hazy. From the back of his head, a single dagger could be seen embedded in it!

Bai Yunfei drew back his left arm as he gave a single nod of his head to Jing Mingfeng. Then, he began to chase after Zhao Chuan.

Jing Mingfeng hadn’t been any slower as he dashed into the forest and disappeared out of sight...

Zhao Chuan in this one moment had been completely overwhelmed with shock when he saw the death of the last beast tamer at the hands of the youths. His eyes had already dilated so much that they were practically the size of needles. His feet worked so well that his retreat had doubled in speed, and now all he wanted to do was to run into the forest.

He had been so convinced that this kidnapping operation would be a cinch! However, these two youths had turned the operation into a monumental failure that had not only resulted in the annihilation of the men from the Beast Taming School, but had also brought his own life into jeopardy!

There was no longer any of his previous confidence or any of his previous bravado. In this current moment, all that was left was a single thought, escape!

“F*ck it all, what in the world was that attack!? Was that a soul skill? What kind of Soul Sprite is capable of such a terrifying soul technique!! That spear of his definitely has to be abnormal as well! F*ck! Since when did the son of the house of Ye have such powerful

friends! If those two get involved in the conflict between the houses, there'll definitely be a tragedy! I must warn the lord and unite with the Beast Taming School to eliminate these two at once!"

In the midst of his escape, Zhao Chuan's mind had been reeling with panic. Seeing that Bai Yunfei was chasing behind him without fail, the man grit his teeth together before forcing his soulforce to shoot out a ray of purple light at Bai Yunfei. Without even seeing if his attack landed, the man twisted his foot so that he'd shoot into the forest to the side.

Halfway through his leap, Bai Yunfei had already dodged the blade coming at him and cried out loud, "Do it now!"

Frightened, Zhao Chuan instantly remembered that there was still yet another person that had disappeared into the forest earlier. He was most likely hiding in wait to ambush him. Turning around, the man prepared to fend off the incoming ambush.

When he turned his head, there was no one in sight and nothing strange to be seen.

"Crap! It was a trap!" Not even a second later, Zhao Chuan realized what had just happened. He had fallen for an extremely obvious trick because of his panic!

Chapter 129: Destroying the Evidence

“Crap! It was a trap!” Not even a second later, Zhao Chuan realized what had just happened. He had fallen for an extremely obvious trick because of his panic!

The moment he turned back to look, Zhao Chuan felt a tugging sensation on his right leg. Looking down, he realized that Bai Yunfei had thrown a golden rope earlier that just seemed to “glide” over twenty meters, snugly wrapping around his foot! With this realization, Zhao Chuan wasted no time to slash his blade against the rope. But alas! Despite the sparks that flew, the rope was not cut!

A glint sparkled in Bai Yunfei’s eye when he saw this moment of succession. Pulling his right hand back, he forced Zhao Chuan to tumble to the ground while simultaneously speeding up to catch up. In the blink of an eye, he caught up to Zhao Chuan and brought his Fire-tipped Spear down toward his opponent’s stomach!

Aside from shock, there was a frenetic gleam in Zhao Chuan’s eye. The claws of death gripped his heart, forcing him to forego the sensation of the golden rope tied around his foot. His sword managed to swing out in one final attempt to escape from the brink of death. Somehow he managed to smash it against the shaft of the spear just enough to bring it careening to the side of his stomach, opening up a long gash in it.

The explosive effect of the Fire-tipped Spear had failed to activate, but Bai Yunfei took it in stride and recalled his spear back into his space ring. Without a weapon in hand, he was able to maneuver his fist down. With a powerful strike, he unleashed a powerful blow to the stomach of Zhao Chuan with the Ninefold Fist Force!

A crazy glare made its way into Zhao Chuan’s eyes as he tried to bite and swallow the rest of the blood coming out of his mouth.

Exhausting all of the soulforce he could muster, the blade in his hand exploded with a dazzling amount of light. It came zipping toward Bai Yunfei's face at a lightning-quick speed!

Bai Yunfei quickly analyzed the situation. He didn't bother to lift his right hand back. Instead, he allowed the blade to continue until a clear clinking sound could be heard. The Flameblade Bracer had successfully repelled it!

Bai Yunfei grunted as he tried to suppress the numbing sensation in his shoulder that had been formed from the backlash of the impact between blade and bracer. With a rush of soulforce into the bracer, it began to light up before a one meter long blade of flame materialized into view. Right in front of the forlorn eyes of Zhao Chuan, the blade came down on him with no hesitation!!

"Pfttt!!"

Following the sounds of flesh being cut, the blade managed to bisect Zhao Chuan in a diagonal motion from left shoulder to the right side of the waist. An acrid smell of something burning floated into the air, and when Zhao Chuan turned his head to look down at where his body had been cleaved, a black scorched 'trace' greeted his eyes. His head dropped back to the ground, and his mouth opened up to let loose a small wisp of steam. It rose into the air, and his eyes slowly began to lose focus...

A moment later, the Flame Winged Blade turned Zhao Chuan's body into a funeral pyre. Before it could do so, Bai Yunfei had managed to secure the body's space ring and blade into his space ring. Putting out the flames, he watched as the wind blew the remaining ashes of Zhao Chuan away, into the earth.

In practically no time at all, two mid-stage Soul Sprites had been killed just like that!

The +12 additional effect from the Flameblade Bracer had been activated when Bai Yunfei needed it the most, the powerful Flame Winged Blade! The Flame Winged Blade was a skill that completely

outclassed whatever power Bai Yunfei's opponents thought it possessed. With its power, it completely decimated the Soul Sprite from the Beast Taming School, and shell shocked Zhao Chuan at the same time; what unimaginable power it had! Combined with the intent to kill from Bai Yunfei, Zhao Chuan had been utterly cowed. After that, it had been an easy task to kill him!

In the past, Bai Yunfei had always been chased by those who were even stronger than him, making even escape extremely difficult. Today he realized just how strong both he and his upgraded equipment were against those of the same level of strength!

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It was only after he finished putting the short blade into his space ring that Bai Yunfei managed to let out a sigh of relief. With a quick glance around, he managed to ascertain that all five people had been killed. He was free to walk to the forest where Tianming had been dragged and pull him back out.

With the beast tamer dead, the snake that had been wrapped around Tianming's leg had lost all of its autonomous motion. It remained limp like a piece of rope. This allowed Bai Yunfei to 'free' Tianming from it and throw it to the side.

It took a brief moment for Bai Yunfei to make a detailed analysis of what was happening to Tianming, but he was able to let out a sigh of relief after finding out that he had only fainted. Taking out a small dagger, he made a careful incision near where the bite had been on Tianming's arm. He then allowed his soulforce to leak into the wound. Not too much time later, the venom that had been injected into Tianming's body was detoxified, meaning that Tianming would wake up soon.

"Brother Bai? What's going on? Why does my head hurt..." Tianming groaned as he awoke. Shaking his head to clear away the rest of his dizziness, Tianming immediately became alert, "Ah! Caretaker Zhao! Brother Bai, are you okay? Were we captured?!"

Even after he spoke, Tianming realized that something was amiss with the situation. Firstly, he saw the mountains overhead behind Bai Yunfei. Secondly, caretaker Zhao was nowhere in sight, and the two tigers and wolf were motionless on the ground along with their respective three beast tamers. It did not take much for Tianming to realize that these three men were all the same people from the Beast Taming School.

“Brother Bai... wha-what happened here?” Tianming asked Bai Yunfei in befuddlement.

The other boy only smiled in response, “Nothing really, everything has been taken care of...”

While he was speaking, two distant cries of misery could be heard. Bai Yunfei paused mid-speech and stared up at the tree branches. Not too long later, the sounds of leaves being rustled could be heard before Jing Mingfeng reappeared with a body in each hand. Slowly leaping down, he discreetly looked around before giving a nod to Bai Yunfei. Throwing the bodies to the side, he walked on over the two.

“Brother Jing, are you...” As Tianming was about to ask a question of his well-being, he saw just what exactly had been tossed beside him, “Eh? This person, he’s...”

“Hm? What was that? Do you know this person, Tianming?” Bai Yunfei asked with raised eyebrows.

Scrunching his eyebrows together in deep thought, Tianming nodded his head slowly. “I think I do... oh! If I remember correctly, this guy once showed up at the same time of that damned fatty from the house of Zhao! One time, he helped the stupid fatty beat the crap out of some young heir to another house for accidentally crossing paths with him!”

“Someone from the house of Zhao? That sounds about right...” Bai Yunfei nodded.

“Oh, brother Bai, what happened to caretaker Zhao? And those other people, are they...”

“Yea. They came with ill intentions, so in order for them to not leave anything behind, we had to kill them all.”

“Kill!? You killed even the caretaker?”

“Yes, he’s dead.”

“.....”

Tianming was dumbfounded by Bai Yunfei’s cavalier attitude. He didn’t even know how he should say it. The caretaker of the house of Zhao was a soul cultivator of the mid-stage Soul Sprite level. In Gaoyi City, he was considered one of the strongest. Even Ye Ting, his father, would have to show him some face whenever they met, but with Bai Yunfei downplaying the caretaker’s death like this, it was rather...

“Ol’Bai, so, just how should we... take care of this?” Jing Mingfeng pointed at the corpses and soulbeasts around them for Bai Yunfei to answer.

Standing back up from his squatting position, Bai Yunfei held up his right hand, revealing a bright ball of flames that levitated over it. He slowly walked over to one of the corpses before he turned to look at the other two, “Burn them. We can’t leave any evidence behind.”

With fire filling the air around them and all around the corpses, it did not take long for them to turn into ashes. With Jing Mingfeng by the side, he swished his hand so that the winds would scatter the ashes everywhere...

With the flames devouring everything, absolutely nothing was left.

After all of the bodies were burned and reduced to ashes, the space rings were taken from the Beast Taming School members, and ransacked for whatever valuables they had.

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“Brother Bai, what should we do now?” Tianming later asked Bai Yunfei in hesitation.

Bai Yunfei had just stored the space rings into his own ring when he suddenly looked in the direction of Gaoyi City with narrowed eyes, “Someone’s here, and it looks like a small group of people...”

Jing Mingfeng noticed the situation up front as well when he asked, “Should we evade them?”

“No need,” Bai Yunfei shook his head, “We’re just travelers... let’s see how this works out.”

Even as they were debating to one another, the sounds of frantic footsteps grew louder and louder, and before long, a group of people pushed their way through the trees. The leading figure briefly glanced over Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng before the third person caught his eye, “Tianming!” He cried out in joy.

“Bro!” Tianming was startled to see who it was that had called out to him, but he replied full of happiness.

This newcomer was roughly twenty years old, and bore a strikingly similar appearance to Tianming. At a rough estimation, Bai Yunfei evaluated this person as a soul cultivator at the early-stage Soul Sprite level. Right behind him was another six or seven people that were soul cultivators as well, but only just Soul Personages or Soul Warriors at most. They too, however, were ecstatic to see Tianming, and visibly relaxed upon the sight.

“You’re okay, what a relief!” The man cried out when he saw Tianming before patting him on the shoulder.

“Eh? Bro, what’s going on?” Tianming questioned.

“We received information that you were on your way back home. The caretaker from the house of Zhao also heard that information. He came after you with some people from the Beast Taming School. Knowing that they were definitely going to try and kidnap

you to blackmail our family, second uncle and I came running as fast as we could. We were worried that you'd be kidnapped already, but thank heavens you're alright..."

"Second uncle's here too? Where is he?" Tianming asked.

"Right here." As soon as Tianming asked, a second figure walked out of the right side of the forest. This newcomer was a middle-aged man with a decent build, wearing armor. He was a late-stage Soul Sprite in power which added to his demeanor. "I haven't detected anyone suspicious. Did the house of Zhao or the Beast Taming School not find Tianming? Or did something else happen to them..."

"Well... the people from the Beast Taming School were just here a moment ago." Jing Mingfeng suddenly answered from behind Tianming. He pointed to where the corpses of the beast tamers had been laying before they had been cremated.

"What!? Then where are they now?" Tianming's uncle cried out in alarm.

"Right now?" Jing Mingfeng chuckled before circling around with his right hand, "They're everywhere."

Thinking that Jing Mingfeng was joking with him, the second uncle narrowed his eyes and barked, "What are you getting at!?"

"Tianming, who might these two be?" Tianming's brother asked with a pointed look at Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng.

"Oh oh! Let me introduce you to everyone," Tianming hurried to reply, "These are the two friends I made on the outside. This is Bai Yunfei, and this is Jing Mingfeng. They've been looking after me on our way and even saved me."

Finishing his sentence, he then introduced the two to his family, "Brother Bai, brother Jing, this is my big bro, Ye Tianwen, and this is my second uncle, Ye Quan.

"What did you say, they saved you? What do you mean by that?"

Ye Tianwen gave Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng a nod before looking back to Tianming.

“Uh...” Tianming didn’t answer right away. He hesitantly looked at Bai Yunfei.

Chapter 130: Unexpected Information

“What did you just say? They saved you? What do you mean by that?” Ye Tianwen gave Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng a slight nod before rounding back to Tianming.

“Uh...” Tianming didn’t answer right away. Instead, he hesitantly looked at Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei hesitated as well. Sparing a brief glance to the men behind Ye Tianwen, he asked, “Are these men... reliable?”

“Wha?” Ye Tianwen was confused momentarily before smiling when he understood what Bai Yunfei meant. “These are the elite soldiers of the house of Ye, you can rest assured that they are reliable.”

With that reassurance, Bai Yunfei gave the nod for Tianming to finally recount the events that had just transpired here.

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“So what you’re saying is that those two killed not only Zhao Chuan, but the people from the Beast Taming School as well? And not a single one of them escaped!?”

Ye Quan was extremely skeptical at what Tianming had said, and thus, he questioned the other two.

“Hmph! If you’re going to ask for proof of our actions, I’m sorry to tell you that they’ve all been burned to ashes already! There’s no way to prove it, so take it as you will!” Jing Mingfeng looked seemingly insulted by the lack of belief by Ye Quan. He snorted in dissatisfaction.

“Haha, brother Jing Mingfeng, please don’t be angry. My uncle wasn’t really casting doubt on your actions.” Ye Tianwen had been paying attention to the two ever since Tianming began his story. The very fact that they had been calm and at ease with themselves as the story was told without a twitch in their face was a testament

of their strengths. At a closer look, their strengths were without a doubt stronger than Ye Quan and his own. With that, he smiled, “I’d like to thank you two for looking after my little brother. Come with us back to Gaoyi City, and we’ll make sure to receive you into our home like honored guests.”

“Yes! Let’s go back home first.” Tianming interjected, “If we weren’t bothered by those people, we would have been home a long time ago.”

“Oh, brother! What’s going on back home? Why is the house of Zhao suddenly trying to kidnap me? And the Beast Taming School, what are they doing here...” Tianming asked, all of a sudden, as everyone started to walk back to Gaoyi City.

“Ah! That’s a long story to tell, really.” Ye Tianwen sighed. “Last month, the second scion of the house of Zhao, Zhao Liang, suddenly came to our home and asked for Ye Yan’s hand in marriage...”

“What!?” Tianming flew into the air with exasperated anger, “Is that stupid fatty kidding!? Did all of the fish, chicken, pork, or whatever meat it was, addle his brain for him to think that he could marry our cousin? I know the frog dreams of eating the meat of a swan, but that’s all it ever amounts to — wishful thinking!”

“Yes, father thought the same way as well at the time and declined him outright.” Ye Tianwen continued. “But we didn’t imagine that Ye Yan would be accosted by Zhao Liang one day, nor that she would manage to hit him in her anger.”

“Hah! Serves that fatass right! A civilian wants to marry our cousin who’s already a Mid-stage Soul Personage? He deserved it!” Tianming hooted.

“Tianming, stop interrupting and let your brother finish what he has to say.” Bai Yunfei chastised him with a slap on the shoulder. “That fat ass is still the scion of the house of Zhao. No matter where he goes, he should have been accompanied by bodyguards

wherever he went. Doesn't that mean there was some sort of trap to begin with if he was injured by your cousin?"

"Oh? Brother Bai, you were able to tell that the house of Zhao had been planning this with just this little information?" Ye Tianwen was taken aback by Bai Yunfei's analysis, but nonetheless, he nodded his head. "Correct, Zhao Liang had done that on purpose. With that incident, the house of Zhao came knocking on our doorsteps looking for trouble. Rumors began to spread so fast and far that the entire city caught wind of it, and by that point, our differences became conflicts that had to be resolved now rather than later."

"Ha! The bickering of the younger generation was able to cause two houses to start fighting? It's obviously just a flimsy excuse from the house of Zhao to start a war!" Jing Mingfeng snorted in derision.

"Yes, that's exactly the case. Anyone could tell what the house of Zhao was trying to do. However, they continued to try and obstruct our businesses as well. Three out of four times they would cause a ruckus inside our stores, and one time they nearly made off with Ye Yan as well. If it were not for our uncle who injured Zhao Ye, they would have been able to kidnap Ye Yan."

"Afterward, the master of the house of Zhao, Zhao Xing, arrived at our doorsteps with a group of strangers. He demanded that the house of Ye submit to the house of Zhao, or face destruction!"

"Wha!?" Tianming could hold it no longer as he howled in anger, "Is Zhao Xing as pig-headedly stupid as his son!? What right does the house of Zhao have to demand such a thing from us!?"

Ye Tianwen shook his head, "In the past, they would not have, but today... they have, they have finally aligned themselves with the Beast Taming School!"

"The house of Zhao has allied with the Beast Taming School!? How in the world did they get one of the ten schools to notice

them?” Tianming was aghast at that realization.

“It wasn’t the house of Zhao who were currying favor with them, but the Beast Taming School had personally come to see them. For what reason, no one knows, but when the Beast Taming School came with their two promises, the house of Zhao didn’t hesitate to agree to serve them.”

“What promises?”

“The first promise was that they would send the house of Zhao a fifth-tier soulbeast; the second promise was to help the Zhao annex the Ye!”

Seeing the stunned expression on Tianming’s face, Ye Tianwen continued to speak, “With a rapport like that, the house of Zhao surpassed the house of Liu to become the strongest house in Gaoyi city, so even the Liu could not stand up against them either. In the past, the Zhao and Ye had equal strengths, but with this paradigm shift due to the Beast Taming school, our house has lost the power we once had. They could suppress our entire house with just that fifth-tier soulbeast alone, let alone with the help of the Beast Taming School!”

“There was something fortunate however. Sometime during the transportation of the fifth-tier soulbeast, it escaped from the Beast Taming School. Even more surprising, it made a soul contract with another soul cultivator!” What Ye Tianwen didn’t take notice of was that when he mentioned this one piece of information, Bai Yunfei and the other two blanched. “Just this afternoon, the soul cultivator responsible for that even appeared in Gaoyi City! The Beast Taming School of course saw this and dispatched some people to ambush them, causing both parties to run out the city. A late-stage Soul Sprite was sent after them to capture them, and it’s fortunate that he was sent, or else he would have been sent to capture you instead. It’s terrifying to even thi...”

“Brother Tianwen, could that soulbeast be perhaps the fifth-tier

quickshade bird? And were those two soul cultivators that were chased out of the city two females!?” Bai Yunfei’s face drained of color as he interrupted Ye Tianwen mid-speech with a hint of urgency.

“Hm? How did you know that?” Ye Tianwen asked in astonishment.

“Ol’ Bai...” Jing Mingfeng looked to Bai Yunfei grimly.

“Ah! That’s Miss Xinyun!” Tianming realized in shock.

“Tianming, what are you — wait, do you know those two soul cultivators!?” Ye Tianwen caught onto just why the three had the reaction they did on their face. He asked a question to confirm his doubts.

“Yes, we’re...”

“Brother Tianwen, do you know just which direction they ran off to?” Bai Yunfei interrupted Tianming this time with even greater urgency.

“Oh, I believe it was that way...” Ye Tianwen pointed to his right with some doubts.

“Jing Mingfeng, let’s go!” Bai Yunfei did not hesitate to give the command for Jing Mingfeng to follow him. Without even waiting for the rest of the group, they blew past Ye Tianwen into the direction they pointed at. With their speed, it did not take long before the two figures disappeared from sight.

“Brother Bai, wait for me!” Tianming started to shout as he chased after them.

However, Ye Tianwen stopped him with a single hand and a solemn expression, “Tianming, what is going on here?”

“Miss Xinyun is in trouble, we have to go save her!” The boy was extremely frantic in his response. Grabbing at his older brother’s hand urgently, he cried, “Brother! Come with us! Uncle, you and

brother have to go help Miss Xinyun!"

"Does this mean that the soul cultivator who stole that soulbeast away from the Beast Taming School is someone you know?" Ye Tianwen asked once more.

"Yes! She's a friend! Brother, let's go! We have to save her!" Tianming struggled to pull his brother's hand along, but the amount of resistance he felt surprised him.

"Brother? Don't tell me..."

"Pah! How naive are you? It's lucky that you're the second scion to the house of Ye. We're up against the Beast Taming School. Do you really think we can afford to make them our enemy? They only just need to move a finger and our entire home would be obliterated. Turned to dust! Do you want to consign our entire family to eternal damnation!?" Ye Quan cut him off with an icy rebuke.

"That... I..." Helpless, Tianming looked to his brother to plead one more time, "Brother..."

His brother only shook his head with a sigh, "I'm sorry, Tianming. Your uncle and I have our hands tied. The Beast Taming School is... not something we can fight against."

He looked off in direction Bai Yunfei had disappeared in, "Your friend Bai Yunfei knew that and didn't call you to go with him for that reason. Neither did he ask me for help... but if they're willing to run off to help those two by themselves, I am sure they have some sort of plan. Be at ease, they should be fine."

Tianming hesitated, but then a clear plan formulated in his head as he looked up once more at Ye Tianwen with determination. "I understand now, brother. You and second uncle can go back first. If the house of Ye won't participate, then... I'll go by myself!!"

With an abrupt roundabout, he flew off in the direction Bai Yunfei had headed.

His actions were a surprise for both Ye Quan and Ye Tianwen since they had never seen Tianming so serious and determined before. By the time they had been brought back to awareness, Tianming was already gone from sight. “Tianwen, do you think we should bring Tianming back? As he is...” Ye Quan trailed off.

At last, the expression on Ye Tianwen’s face shifted to reveal a look of gratification. Sighing, he shook his head. “We’ll just chase him, but under no circumstances should we fight them; if Tianming tries anything, we’ll bring him back.”

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It had been two hours since they had learned about what had happened to Tang Xinyun and Zhao Mancha. For the entire duration of the travel, Bai Yunfei’s face had been grim and dark as they traveled through the forests and plains before finally coming across a three hundred meter tall mountain.

Without even a dip in speed, they charged into the mountains. A little farther and Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up at the sight of something, “I’ve found them! They’re up ahead!!”

“Chirp!!”

Meanwhile, a loud and clear chirping sound made its way to Bai Yunfei’s ears from up ahead. This chirp was clearly a very angry one and somewhat frantic...

“Xiao Bai!!”

Chapter 131: Xinyun In Trouble

Within an enormous mansion located in the northeastern part of Gaoyi City.

The spacious hall was partly filled with the golden glow of the evening sunset, which sharply contrasted with the areas that the rays couldn't reach.

However, there were no servants within the vast hall. Only two figures could be seen sitting on the head seats. They seemed to be discussing something.

The person on the left was wearing a set of beautiful clothes. He had thick eyebrows and big eyes as well as a rough face. However, he exuded a faint imposing aura. This person was the head of the house of Zhao, Zhao Xing; The person on the right was wearing a black gown. He had thin lips and a sharp nose. He had black hair, but streaks of gray could be seen in it. He looked around the age of fifty. In his arms, a black cat-like beast with three tails could be seen as he stroked it rather passively. This person was called Li Chen, and he was a mid-stage Soul Ancestor from the Beast Taming School who came to subjugate the house of Zhao.

“Attendant Li, it has almost been a day since your men have left. They still haven’t returned yet, could it be that their pursuit has failed? That quickshade bird...” Zhao Xing slightly furrowed his brows as he glanced outside before he carefully asked a question.

Li Chen’s expression remained unchanged. However, he leaned his head slightly as he shot a glance at Zhao Xing. He then indifferently said, “What? Does the Head of the house of Zhao think that my Beast Taming School is unable to retrieve that quickshade bird?”

“No no, that isn’t what I meant. It’s just that....the quickshade bird is considerably strong, and combined with the two soul cultivators, then if it were to try its best to run away....”

“Worry not, While Wu Sen may only be a late-stage Soul Sprite, he is the tamer of the Thunderbird, an early-stage fifth-tier soulbeast. Dealing with the still recovering quickshade bird will be of no problem at all. Of the two soul cultivators, Wu Sen can deal with the mid-stage Soul Sprite. The master of the quickshade bird is merely a Soul Warrior, so either Fang Hao or Tai Ping would be able to bring her to submission as they will without a problem. They should be returning soon in fact.” Li Chen spoke calmly as he caressed the three-tailed spirit cat.

Zhao Xing hesitated for a while before he said, “But... that quickshade bird has already signed a soul contract with someone else. This...”

Li Chen furrowed his eyebrows as he spoke, “Let me reassure you, I will of course have a way to fulfill my promise to you. That soul cultivator is weak, and the soul contract she made with the quickshade bird was only just made not too long ago. When the time comes in the future, I’ll teach you a secret of the Beast Taming School that’ll allow you to force the soul seal into a slave seal. With the slave seal, you will be able to control the quickshade bird as you please. The intelligence of the bird will drop by several degrees, but you’ll be able to control the bird to your orders as you please.”

Zhao Xing’s eyes brightened, and he was almost unable to conceal his excitement; Although he would only obtain a basic secret technique of the Beast Taming School, this indicated that he was already considered as a half-disciple of the Beast Taming School. This was something that was completely beneficial for the future development of the house of Zhao.

“Yes, yes! Many thanks to attendant Li for supporting me! In the future, my house of Zhao will follow the Beast Taming School heart and soul. I will wholeheartedly serve my school!”

When Zhao Xing saw that Li Chen had shut his eyes to rest, he didn’t dare to continue with his flattery. He turned around to look

outside the house with an excited light flickering in his eyes. He thought to himself, “With the support of the Beast Taming School, the City Lord and the house of Liu won’t be able to do anything. I’ll have the quickshade bird in my hands; when Zhao Chuan delivers that brat from the house of Ye to me, I’ll no longer have to rely on the help of the Beast Taming School to force the house of Ye to a compromise! At that time, my house of Zhao will be able to suppress the house of Liu to finally become the number one family of Gaoyi City!”

Within rather vast open plains, the resonant sound of a bird cry shattered the evening tranquility, echoing into the distance.

“Jiu!”

Xiao Bai let out a long cry. At this moment, it was no longer that small sparrow-like white bird. Instead, it had returned to its combat mode, and was even bigger than the time when Bai Yunfei had rescued it. When its pair of three-meter-long wings spread out, a green energy gathered around its surroundings. Following the movements of its wings, wind blades flew out in all directions.

Another loud bird cry echoed from the direction Xiao Bai was facing. A purple shadow flashed across the sky. It instantly passed through the wind blades as it shot toward Xiao Bai’s right side like a bolt of lightning. The purple shadow stopped, revealing its body. It was a large sparrow, albeit smaller than Xiao Bai, with purple energy surrounding it. Its body was also covered with faint-purple feathers, and it could be seen that it originally had purple-colored eyes. However, they were currently filled with a bloody-red color, and contained no trace of spirit within them.

The Thunderbird easily dodged the many wind blades that were coming at it. However, the two birds that were planning to secretly attack the quickshade bird from its left weren’t so lucky. They were forced into a rather sorry state as they tried to dodge the wind blades. The gray bird was able to rely on its nimbleness to forcefully dodge the wind blades, but the golden eagle wasn’t able

to dodge in time, causing its right wing and chest to be struck by wind blades. It was pushed back several tens of meters before finally stopping. Although it didn't seem to be injured, its movements were clearly slower than before.

These two birds were the birds that had previously attacked the quickshade bird, the goldfeathered eagle and the galebird.

The presence of these two soulbeasts would naturally reveal the presence of their masters, Fang Hao and Tai Ping. Roughly two hundred meters below the four birds were the aforementioned two, Fang Hao and Tai Ping. Alternating between both the ground in front of them and the skies above with rapt attention, the two of them had been completely still. Yet the looks on their faces had suggested that they were quite busy at the moment.

Several hundred meters away in a similarly downwind direction of the four birds, the beautiful silhouette of a woman in white was flying left and right. The meter-long but flexible swords in both her hands flashed through the air and left behind mirror images in an attempt to defend herself from the twin assault of the giant bat that would attack her head on while a small colorful snake tried to ambush her every so often.

It was Tang Xinyun.

Tang Xinyun had looked rather exhausted as a result of dealing with the two soulbeasts. The white robes she wore was already tattered and torn in several places, and three grisly-looking wounds could be seen on her left wrist. Even though the bleeding had already been staunched, the wound itself and the trail of leftover blood over her snowy-white skin was an especially crude sight.

It could be seen that the two attacking soulbeasts, or rather their masters, were somewhat apprehensive and didn't wish to kill her, which resulted in the two soulbeasts not launching any deadly attacks. Therefore, Tang Xinyun was still able to barely withstand

their onslaught even though she was weaker in comparison to her pursuers. However, if they dragged it on any longer, she would definitely be defeated due to exhaustion.

Tang Xinyun was currently experiencing difficulties, but aunty Zhao, who had always been her bodyguard, was unable to rescue her. The reason for this was due to the fact that Zhao Mancha was also unable to escape from her opponent. At an area a little over a hundred meters away from Tang Xinyun's right, Zhao Mancha was currently engaged in a battle with a black Spirit Monkey. Despite the ferocity in both her expression and attacks, the Spirit Monkey, which was shorter than her by a head, was leaping all around her while screeching. It had actually trapped the woman within the area and left her unable to reach Tang Xinyun's side.

Whenever she tried her best to force the Spirit Monkey back and rush to Tang Xinyun's side, the ground beneath her feet would suddenly give way to reveal gigantic dirt-colored pincers like the ones a crab would have attack her. Zhao Mancha had no other choice but to leap away each time the pincers tried to clamp down onto her feet, but with the Spirit Monkey taking the opportunity to leap at her, she was unable to take another step closer to Tang Xinyun.

It wasn't just one soulbeast that she was fighting, there were actually two.

There had been many wounds inflicted onto Zhao Mancha's body. There had been a bloody patch of red on her right calf from where the soulbeast hidden in the ground had caused. Another three long wounds could be seen on her back as well from when the Spirit Monkey had attacked her with its sharp claws. But even with these heavy wounds, Zhao Mancha seemed to be unaware of it almost and continued to fight with all her might to try to return to Tang Xinyun's side.

A middle-aged, long-faced man dressed in a black shirt was standing over ten meters away from Aunty Zhao. He had a stern

face while he stared at her, and his expression was similar to Fang Hao's and Tai Ping's. He was clearly concentrated on controlling the two soulbeasts that were fighting with Aunty Zhao.

Not too far away from him was a man who was also dressed in black clothes. His yellow face had been watching the sky above him with an indifferent look while the fingers on his right hand seemed to twitched subconsciously. The purple light around his body had been identical to the Thunderbird flying in the sky. This person was the very same Wu Sen that Li Chen had spoken about. A late-stage Soul Sprite with the thunder affinity and also tamer of the thunderbird—the strongest soulbeast he had in his control.

Chapter 132: Stay Your Hands!!

Tang Xinyun gently bit her lip. With a resolute look on her face, she slashed at the body of the colorful snake that had shot from the grass on her right. Sparks splashed from where she hit the snake's body. Although the little snake was struck flying, it clearly wasn't injured.

Tang Xinyun took advantage of the short moment she had to shoot a glance at aunty Zhao. She had seen that the woman was unable to break through the entrapment of the opponents around her even though she was madly attacking them. She could hear Xiao Bai's cries, filled with anger and desperation. A trace of despair flashed through Tang Xinyun's eyes, but it was immediately replaced with a look of unwavering determination. She continued using her sword to defend against the attacks of the black bat while doing her best to slowly move closer to Zhao Mancha.

She and aunty Zhao had deliberately sped up their footsteps after leaving Bai Yunfei's group of three within Guyi City. They had reached Gaoyi City in the morning, but they were unexpectedly met with an inexplicable ambush not long after they entered the city. If it were not for Xiao Bai's vigilance, the two of them most likely would've been captured during the initial ambush.

When the enemies revealed themselves, both Tang Xinyun and Zhao Mancha immediately realized that they were from the Beast Taming School and were after Xiao Bai. With this realization in mind, the both of them immediately fled from Gaoyi City. However, the enemies didn't give up their pursuit. Their enemies continued to chase after them for a long time as they tried to escape. In the end, they were still intercepted by their enemies in this area, and were forced into a bitter fight.

The faint groan from Zhao Mancha alarmed Tang Xinyun. Hastily turning around, she saw the monkey let out a screech while

Zhao Mancha dodged the attacks coming from underground. Energy an earthly yellow color surged from its body to gather around its right arm. As if soaking in this energy, the monkey's right arm immediately expanded to more than half its usual size while its nails had the densest concentration of orange light around it. Kicking off the ground with its powerful legs, the monkey leapt at Zhao Mancha and swung with its right hand to try and deal a heavy blow onto her waist.

“Aunty Zhao!!”

Tang Xinyun cried out in alarm as she forced away the large bat in front of her. Just as she was about to run to the older woman, a whirlwind suddenly appeared behind her, catching her off-guard and sweeping her away due to her inattentiveness. Although the whirlwind didn't have much power, it still lifted her several meters into the air. After that, it threw her heavily against the ground.

On the other side, aunty Zhao was struck on the waist by the Spirit Monkey, causing her to stagger two steps to the right. She couldn't help but spit out a mouthful of blood as four deep wounds appeared on the left side of her waist.

After spitting out a mouthful of blood, a berserk look appeared in her eyes. She rapidly rotated her soulforce and raised her longsword as the orange light was released. Then, she let out a low roar as she turned her blade around to stab it into the ground beneath her without any hesitation.

It was the same soul skill that she had previously used against Bai Yunfei in Guyi City. Only, the might of the skill now was several times greater. The ground within a radius of ten meters surrounding her surged upward as dazzling orange lights, that resembled blades, pierced through the ground. The Spirit Monkey had initially wanted to continue pursuing her, but it was struck by one of the orange lights. Blood and flesh immediately blasted out of its shoulders as a bone-deep wound was carved into its body.

The person from the Beast Taming School had started at the sight of that and begun to exert more of his soulforce. The Spirit Monkey had let out a shrill shriek almost immediately as it dodged the increasing amount of sword-light in an attempt to retreat.

Within the time taken for several breaths, nearly a hundred flashes of sword-light had pierced through the ground surrounding the older woman. In this exact moment, the ground to her right suddenly began to shake before a faint creaking sound could be heard. A gleam of light suddenly appeared in her eyes before she let out another grunt to hoist the longsword in her hand up. Following her movements, the hundred or so flashes of sword-light surrounding her seemed to have received a command from her to congregate together roughly ten meters above her head, and within the blink of an eye, they formed an enormous sword that was made of a dazzling orange energy.

In almost the exact instant she raised her longsword, an enormous sword made from the energy had formed. Without any pause whatsoever, she waved her sword and pointed it to her right. When she pointed it at the spot in ground that had made the earlier sound, a “pch” sound was let out, and the enormous energy sword that was originally above her head deeply stabbed into that area.

“Zhi!!”

A single screech resonated through the area before a fierce tremor quaked the earth. Soon after, however, not a sound could be heard. The gigantic sword had slowly transformed into separate gleams of light before ultimately disappearing. Zhao Mancha herself could be seen down on a single knee with only her sword to prop her up from the ground as she gasped for air.

As this happened, the face of the long-faced middle-aged man reddened. He couldn’t help but spit out a mouthful of fresh blood, and he had an incredulous expression on his face.

Despite being heavily injured, Aunt Zhao had been able to activate her supreme technique to kill one of the soulbeasts. This all happened within roughly ten seconds. As Wu Sen looked at Wu Lin, who was spitting blood, he coldly snorted like he was somewhat dissatisfied. When he looked at aunty Zhao again, he had a trace of anger in his eyes. He waved his right hand, causing the distant Thunderbird to let out a long cry. After dodging one of Xiao Bai's wind blades, it suddenly turned around and charged at her.

At this moment, Tang Xinyun had collapsed on the ground and had yet to stand back up. When Tang Xinyun saw that the bird was about to launch a dangerous attack against the still-recovering Zhao Mancha, the look on her face immediately changed. She couldn't help but cry out, "Xiao Bai!"

Xiao Bai's thoughts were connected to hers, and it immediately understood her intentions. While responding with a low cry, it swept its wings and charged toward the woman with a speed that wasn't any inferior to that of the Thunderbird's.

On the other side, the gazes of Fang Hao and Tai Ping flashed as they simultaneously reacted. The Whirlwind Bird that had been behind Xiao Bai suddenly stopped, and its wings swept out, causing many wind blades to whistle out. However, they weren't aimed at Xiao Bai. Instead, they had been aimed at Tang Xinyun, who was trying to get up!!

The goldfeathered eagle also let out a cry and dove down like a golden shadow. It quickly chased after the wind blades, and its steel-like claws flickered with dense golden light.

Xiao Bai had only flown a few dozen meters away, and noticed the peculiar situation that was occurring behind it. Without any hesitation at all, Xiao Bai let out a shriek as it immediately gave up rescuing Zhao Mancha. Its soulforce erupted as Xiao Bai's figure instantly turned back. It managed to fly back to Tang Xinyun's side in just the nick of time, spreading its wings out to protect her.

“Plip plip plip...” The sounds of attacks echoed from Xiao Bai’s back, and its white feathers fluttered about. There were even drops of blood mixed with the feathers...

A flash of golden light had flitted past before a muffled noise was transmitted into Tang Xinyun’s ears. Following that, some fresh blood splattered onto her face. Three deep wounds appeared below Xiao Bai’s left wing and had instantly dyed its feathers red with the blood.

At the same time, a muffled noise also resonated from Zhao Mancha’s location. Although she managed to dodge the Thunderbird at the last moment, it still managed to scratch her right shoulder and tear off a piece of flesh, causing blood to flow out. Most importantly, her body had been numbed after being scratched by the Thunderbird’s lightning-infused claw, and her movements had immediately grown sluggish as a result.

Unfortunately, right at this critical moment, Wu Sen clenched his teeth as he waved his hand, and a sinister look on his face. A bloody light appeared in the eyes of the spirit monkey, which had already leaped ten meters into the air. It pounced toward the half-kneeling woman!

Tang Xinyun seemed to have been frightened by this sudden turn of events to the extent where she didn’t know what to do. However, her opponents were clearly not in a daze like her. After the whirlwind bird and the goldfeathered eagle injured Xiao Bai, they dove down again without any pause at all, intending to press their advantage with continued attacks. As for the thunderbird, it let out a cry as it once more charged at Xiao Bai, shooting toward it with such lightning-fast speed that it looked like a violet arrow.

A single moment of carelessness had resulted in the fall into a hopeless situation.

A cold sneer appeared on the corner of Wu Sen’s mouth. Although he had wasted more energy than he had originally

expected to, the current situation was settled. In fact, if it hadn't been for the fact that they couldn't kill Tang Xinyun, since she had just signed a spirit contract with the quickshade bird, there was no way that Tang Xinyun and Zhao Mancha would've been able to last this long. Now, they just had to bring the quickshade bird and the girl back to successfully complete their task. As for the middle-aged woman, they would allow Wu Lin to vent his anger on her since she had killed his earthclaw prawn.

Suddenly, Wu Sen's expression suddenly turned stiff. The hair on his body stood up like needles, and he reacted as if by instinct. The purple light on his body explosively flashed, and he unhesitatingly pounced to the left, not caring about how pathetic he looked when doing so.

A fiery-red beam shot over as an explosive roar suddenly echoed within the ears of everyone present.

"Stay your hands!!"

Chapter 133: One Spear Shocks the Enemies

“Stay your hands!”

This sudden roar, which was accompanied by the sharp sound of wind being split, startled everyone present. A fiery-red beam shot past the area that Wu Sen had been standing the instant after he had leaped to the side. Shortly after that, an extremely strong aura of fire approached, causing Wu Sen to feel shocked. He was still in a half-squatting position as he waved his hand to summon a four-foot-tall, two-foot-wide golden shield to block in front of him.

The figure of a human flashed past Wu Sen, but didn’t attack him. Instead, it headed toward the Spirit Monkey that was attacking Zhao Mancha.

“Bang!”

Just as Wu Sen was just starting to relax, a frightful explosive sound rang out from one side. In the following moment, the elemental fire that had been terrifying him had immediately begun to spread his way. Subconsciously, he took a step back as he felt his hair get singed by this heatwave.

An enormous pit with, a radius of almost twenty meters, suddenly appeared in the middle of the battlefield. A blazing spear surrounded by flames was stabbed in the center of the pit as if a divine weapon had descended.

Everyone looked at the spear, its tip still trembling slightly, in absolute shock. A trace of despondency flashed through the minds of everyone present, and even the soulbeasts from the Beast Taming School had paused for an instant due to their masters being distracted.

“Bang!”

Another muffled sound could be heard, causing everyone to suddenly awaken from their stupor. When they turned their heads

to look over, they could see that the Spirit Monkey which had only just been a single meter close to Zhao Mancha had been sent flying backwards. Right in front, a single figure could be seen borrowing the counterforce from his punch to barrel backwards and grab onto Zhao Mancha by the shoulder to carry her to the side.

Flinging his right hand, two icy gleams of light flew out straight towards the Whirlwind Bird and the Goldfeathered Eagle who were both swooping down in that one moment. Leaping down into the pit, he gave a shake of his right arm to bring out a single long spear. Landing on his tiptoes, the man gave several quick leaps in rapid succession to come streaking down to where Tang Xinyun was in the blink of an eye.

From when he appeared out from nowhere to when he saved Zhao Mancha, his actions had taken only a few seconds and had been like the flow of water—smooth and without pause.

The newcomer glanced at the two birds that had managed to dodge the two daggers. Then, he glanced at the Thunderbird who had already been called back by Wu Sen for protection. He gently placed the severely injured Zhao Mancha by Tang Xinyun's side and then looked to the four shocked but grim looking people from the Beast Taming School with a cold expression.

Tang Xinyun had been flustered as she supported Zhao Mancha. Then, she took a deep breath after Zhao Mancha slightly shook her head to indicate that she was fine. When she raised her head to look at the person in front of her, doubt appeared on her face. She didn't recognize this person, but he seemed to be somewhat familiar.

“Take aunty Zhao away first, I'll deal with things here.”

At this moment, Tang Xinyun's expression turned blank as she heard the words of the newcomer in front of her. Her gaze fell on the red spear that was held by the newcomer.

“You... you're...”

Bai Yunfei furrowed his brows and interrupted her, “Don’t waste time! Go!”

Zhao Mancha pressed her left hand on her right shoulder to begin the healing process of her injuries. Bai Yunfei had changed his appearance, but she had obviously recognized him. A light flashed through her eyes, as a thought popped up in her head for an instant. Then, she used her right hand to gently pull on Tang Xinyun to speak weakly, “Young miss, listen to him. We should leave quickly. Xiao Bai and I are injured, and your strength is far too weak. If we stay behind, it’ll only be even more dangerous for us. I have a feeling that he has a way to deal with these people...”

After speaking, she couldn’t help but spit out another mouthful of blood, causing her face to turn deathly pale.

Tang Xinyun was alarmed, and she was unable to focus on so many things. She hastily supported aunty Zhao before giving a grateful look to Bai Yunfei. Then, she turned around and ran to the north at high-speed.

Xiao Bai circled around Bai Yunfei’s head twice. Then, it caught up with Tang Xinyun and vigilantly guarded her.

The two people and the bird gradually moved far away. However, the people from the Beast Taming School didn’t make any moves at all, which was unexpected. The four of them didn’t dare to relax at all. They recalled their soulbeasts and stared at Bai Yunfei intently.

Wu Sen placed the shield in front of him, and there was even some cold sweat dripping from his forehead. That frightening explosion caused by the spear had simply terrified him — the sudden explosion of that immensely powerful elemental fire made him believe that this person was at least of the Soul Ancestor level of power.

“Dammit! Why would a mid-stage Soul Ancestor suddenly appear here? No, from the strength of the elemental fire in that previous

attack, it's very possible for him to be at the late-stage Soul Ancestor level of power!"

A drop of sweat slid off Wu Sen's cheek. He was frantically thinking of ways to deal with this newcomer. From the first impression, he had determined that this person was at least of the Soul Ancestor level of power. He didn't even dare to make any moves, much less use his soulsense in the event that he would anger the other party. Currently, he was temporarily too busy to even care about the escaping Tang Xinyun.

Although he was a late-stage Soul Sprite that even possessed a low fifth-class Thunderbird, he didn't have any confidence of winning a fight against this 'Soul Ancestor,' even with the help of his three companions. The Soul Sprite realm and the Soul Ancestor realm were two completely different realms, and he didn't think that he had the power to jump across realms to kill his opponent. Even though he possessed the fifth-tier thunderbird, he still didn't dare to fight against this opponent.

Wu Sen didn't move, and the other three who were weaker than him naturally didn't move either. For a period of time, the spear-wielding Bai Yunfei was stuck in a deadlock with the four of them.

When Tang Xinyun's figure vanished into the distance, Bai Yunfei inwardly relaxed. As for Wu Sen, he gradually recovered from his initial shock and fear. After calming down, he started to feel that something was wrong.

"Eh? Why hasn't he moved yet?" Wu Sen started to become suspicious. He wouldn't find it strange if Bai Yunfei had used his strength to suppress and humiliate everyone before leaving. He was even prepared to immediately start running for his life if Bai Yunfei wanted to kill them. Furthermore, attendant Li wouldn't blame him too much if they failed their mission because of an expert like this.

After the deadlock lasted for another thirty seconds, Wu Sen

finally realized that he had made a mistake. He couldn't help but carefully release his soulsense...

The instant that Wu Sen's soulsense swept over him, Bai Yunfei raised his brow. He knew that it wasn't possible to continue this ruse any longer. Actually, the fact that his ruse achieved this much of an effect had already surpassed Bai Yunfei's expectations. He was originally planning to create an opportunity for Tang Xinyun to escape by immediately attacking after he suddenly appeared. However, he didn't think that the explosion created by the Fire-tipped Spear would intimidate his foes to such an extent like this. Thus, he assumed the manner of an expert to scare his foes. Now that Tang Xinyun had already escaped, being discovered wouldn't matter to him. In any case, he wasn't planning on being kind.

He had killed once before and didn't exactly care about killing again. In any case, his opponent wouldn't let him leave this place alive. This had meant that the only option left was a battle to the death. "Yes," he thought to himself. "I'll live and you'll die."

After using his soulsense, Wu Sen was immediately stunned, "Mid-stage Soul Sprite? How can that be possible..."

He released his soulsense again, and Bai Yunfei was still a mid-stage Soul Sprite. Again. It was still the same... could it be that he had hidden his true power?

That had been Wu Sen's first thought. However, he immediately pushed that thought out of his mind; If he had the ability to hide his strength so perfectly, why would he need to do so in the first place?

When his gaze swept over the Fire-tipped Spear that was flickering with a fiery light, his eyes suddenly brightened, and a flash of understanding appeared in his eyes.

In the next moment, he finally understood what had happened—he had been tricked.

Chapter 134: Like A Hot Knife Through Butter

Wu Sen finally understood what had happened — he had been tricked.

He had actually been tricked by a member of the younger generation that was holding a high quality soul armament! Furthermore, he had also let the mission's target escape because of this!

A burst of anger instantly filled Wu Sen's mind. He didn't even bother to think of how a youth like him could possess the strength of a mid-stage Soul Sprite, or whether a person like him that owned a high quality soul armament would have an extraordinary background or not. He only had one thought in his mind — dismember this person who had ruined his plans into a thousand pieces.

“Dammit! I was...”

Wu Sen raised his right hand, preparing to command the Thunderbird to attack while commanding everyone else to slaughter Bai Yunfei. However, halfway through his words, before the others even knew whether he wanted them to run or to fight, the opposing Bai Yunfei took the initiative to make the first move.

Bai Yunfei flicked his right wrist, throwing a dagger towards Wu Sen's face. At the same time, he pushed off the ground with his feet and charged directly towards Wu Lin who was on Wu Sen's right.

Wu Sen's eyes flickered as he waved his right hand forwards, accurately catching the dagger that was aimed at him. Following that, his eyes went wide, and he let out a slightly astonished cry,

“A soul armament!”

The attack power of a +9 dagger had already entered the extent of what a soul armament was capable of.

After looking up, he saw that Bai Yunfei had shot out another three daggers while charging towards Wu Lin. From the undulations of soulforce on those daggers, he could even tell they were also soul armament—even though they were the lowest type of soul armaments, a mere low grade human-ranked armament.

Bai Yunfei's surprise attack caused Wu Lin to be at a loss for an instant. He had also thought that Bai Yunfei was an expert of the Soul Ancestor realm, so when Bai Yunfei made his move, he had been 'happy' to discover that that his enemy was only a mid-stage Soul Sprite instead. Even so, he didn't dare to neglect the three daggers that were already front of him. Thus, he exerted his soulforce to evade the daggers by ducking downwards. At the same time, the Spirit Monkey let out a screech as it blocked a dagger that Wu Lin was unable to completely dodge. Then, it completely ignored the bone-deep wound on its right arm that was caused by the dagger as it charged towards Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei had remained calm as he looked at the roaring black monkey that was charging towards him. He didn't dodge it. Instead, he passed the Fire-tipped Spear to his left hand and drew back his right hand to his waist. After that, he suddenly struck out at the claw surrounded by orange energy.

Ninefold Fist Force!

"Bang!"

Bai Yunfei's figure paused momentarily while the black monkey staggered backwards repeatedly. Due to the angle of Bai Yunfei's fist, its staggering leaned off to the side and exposed Wu Lin, who was behind the monkey and was retreating frantically as well.

Except for a few special individuals, the soul cultivators of the Beast Taming Sect had to keep their distance while fighting. After all, their specialty was controlling soulbeasts, while their personal strength was relatively low. If they were drawn into a close combat

fight, they simply would not be a match against soul cultivators of the same stage.

His feet continuously moving, Bai Yunfei brushed past the black monkey as he dashed forward. At the same time, he swung his right hand, causing three cold rays of light to shoot out.

“Even more soul armaments!”

Wu Lin’s twitched as he looked at Bai Yunfei, who had already thrown out seven soul armaments as if they were as worthless as cabbage. However, when he saw his brother in a difficult situation, he didn’t have the chance to ponder on it. He pointed his right hand at Bai Yunfei, and the thunderbird that was hovering above his head spread its wings and swooped towards Bai Yunfei like a bolt of lightning.

Wu Lin was stunned as he saw Bai Yunfei easily force back the black monkey. Wu Lin’s was even further shocked when he then saw three more daggers flying towards him, with Bai Yunfei following close behind, not slowing down in the slightest.. He only calmed down slightly as he saw the thunderbird that was rapidly charging towards Bai Yunfei. He poured his soulforce into his legs and stamped on the ground with his right leg, allowing him to change his direction of escape. Thus, he was able to barely dodge the daggers that were flying towards him.

Bai Yunfei’s eyes flashed as he felt the gale behind him. However, he still didn’t try to evade it. Instead, he slightly bent down and lowered his head. The enormous claws of the thunderbird, that were flickering with a purple light, ferociously scratched his back, but only managed to cause some sparks to fly out. His clothes were torn apart, revealing the Goldsilk Soul Armor underneath. Despite blocking the thunderbird’s attack, long tears had appeared on the Goldsilk Soul Armor, an armament that was equivalent to a mid-human tier soul armament! The tears were so deep that they had almost gone completely through the armor!

Bai Yunfei felt his heart skip a beat. "That was close!" He instantly dispersed the faint numbing sensation caused by the attack. The gaze in his eyes grew colder, but he didn't even spare a glance towards the midair thunderbird or the black monkey that was pursuing him. His gaze remained fixed on the retreating Wu Lin.

The speed of his approach suddenly increased, which was caused by the activation of an additional effect from a piece of jewelry that he wore. Bai Yunfei swung his right hand, and another two daggers flew towards Wu Lin, who was several tens of metres away from him.

Wu Lin almost went berserk—Just how many soul armaments can you keep throwing?!?

As he clenched his teeth, Wu Lin twisted his body again to dodge the two daggers. However, his legs were already somewhat sluggish. This was a sign of overexertion.

Bai Yunfei's eyes flashed, and his right hand swung out with an even greater speed. This time, it wasn't multiple icy lights that shot out, just one. Furthermore, it was blue colored.

Glacial Pricker!

Wu Lin's pupils contracted. He was unable to dodge this attack, and he simply didn't have the time to. A berserk look appeared in his eyes as an orange light suddenly surged through his body, which gathered on his heart. In that instant, he was even grateful that Bai Yunfei had aimed at his heart—Because he had a Heart Protecting Mirror, which was a soul armament that barely qualified as a mid-human tier soul armament.

"Ding!"

A weak but clear ringing sound echoed out as Wu Lin's figure slowed down momentarily. Then, he continued to frantically retreat. The Glacial Pricker hadn't even pierced through two

inches of flesh, and it looked like it hadn't struck the center of his heart!

"Brother!"

Wu Sen's eyes widened after seeing that his brother was struck in the heart, a berserk expression appeared on his face as he let out a roar filled with anger, causing a purple light to surge through his entire body. The thunderbird let out a sharp whistle and 'spat' out a bolt of purple lightning which directly struck Bai Yunfei. Wu Lin had shot forth as well, unexpectedly charging towards Bai Yunfei as well.

Violet lightning crashed downwards while the thunderbird followed closely behind in pursuit. The black monkey behind him started to close in, attacking with its sharp claws. And just a short distance away from him, an enraged late-stage Soul Sprite was charging towards him..

Bai Yunfei's eyes slightly flashed, but his gaze was still fixed on Wu Lin. The Fire-tipped Spear had already returned to his right hand, while the Compliant Rope was instantly flung out by his left. It extended over thirty metres under Wu Lin's astonished gaze, and it wrapped around his neck in the blink of an eye!

"Hmph!"

Bai Yunfei coldly snorted as he suddenly stamped his feet. At the same time, he forcefully pulled the Compliant Rope with his left hand while exerting his soulforce to it, causing it to rapidly shorten.

The lightning struck him, causing Bai Yunfei to be split into two. Following that, the monkey's claw split his waist open. Then, the claws of the thunderbird tore him into pieces—However, that was only an afterimage!

Bai Yunfei rushed forth with an unprecedented speed as he activated the full power of the Wave Treading Steps, boosted by

the shockwaves from the dual attacks that had been launched behind him. In almost the same instant that the afterimage behind him vanished, he was already less than ten meters away from the pale-faced and panicked Wu Lin!

“No!”

Wu Sen let out a roar of despair that even contained some pleading within it, but Bai Yunfei didn’t stop. A killing intent flickered through his eyes, and a red light was released from the Fire-tipped Spear. He raised his right arm, and the spear pierced out!

“Pcht!”

Whether it was by accident or on purpose, the spear had once more penetrated towards the heart right next to the Glacial Pricker. Only, this time, the Heart Protecting Mirror wasn’t of any use at all, and the tip of the spear stabbed through Wu Lin’s chest and out through his back.

A single thrust to stab the heart!

Chapter 135: Self Detonation

Although he didn't trigger the explosion effect, this was still a deadly attack. Because of this, the life force in Wu Lin's eyes had started to dissipate gradually.

The black monkey behind him then came to a stop as if it were a puppet that had its strings cut.

Wu Sen's eyes had turned red and his face twisted with indignation as he charged towards Bai Yunfei like an enraged bull. A meter-long broadsword appeared in his grasp with a shake of his right hand. This broadsword was only an incomplete soul armament, which was different from the middle Human-ranked shield.

The soulforce within Wu Sen's body exploded out furiously. A purple light which seemed to contain a few faint thin streaks of lightning started to envelop his broadsword, which caused it to let out a faint buzzing sound. The broadsword trembled, as if it was wailing due to its inability to withstand this enormous power. In this moment, Wu Sen had already charged behind Bai Yunfei and raised the broadsword to bring it ruthlessly down onto Bai Yunfei's skull.

Bai Yunfei had decisively abandoned the thought of reclaiming the Firetipped Spear as he sensed the approaching danger. He loosened his grip on the Firetipped Spear, allowing Wu Lin's corpse to fall backwards. Then, he instantly raised his right hand while turning around, allowing his right hand to block his head.

“Clang!”

The broadsword was rebounded by the force of the collision while Bai Yunfei's arm was completely uninjured. The sword was merely an incomplete soul armament. Even though it was filled with soulforce that exceeded its limits, it still wasn't be able to overcome the defense of the Flameblade Bracer.

Bai Yunfei didn't even feel the expected numbness. He took a step backwards to stabilize his body with an indifferent expression. Then, he drew his right fist back to his waist and suddenly punched Wu Sen's chest before he could attack a second time.

Wu Sen's right arm shook, and that dazzling golden shield appeared in front of him again. At the same time, he continued to bring his sword down. He was planning deliver a chop no matter what, even if it meant receiving Bai Yunfei's extraordinarily powerful fist!

"Bang!"

The sounds of a striking clock reverberated as Bai Yunfei's fist collided with Wu Sen's shield. Wu Sen managed to block the Ninefold Fist Force, but his wish of cutting down Bai Yunfei hadn't been fulfilled due to the strength of Bai Yunfei's fist which had exceeded his predictions. In the instant that he received Bai Yunfei's fist, his sword was still half a foot away from Bai Yunfei's head. However, he was blown backwards along with his shield.

Bai Yunfei couldn't help but stagger backwards because of the enormous concussive force from the collision. The Firetipped Spear was still standing upright, with Wu Lin's body having slid through it to the ground. After pausing for a second, he pulled out the Firetipped Spear with a swing of his hand, then leapt forward, shooting towards the retreating Wu Sen like an arrow that had left its bow.

After Wu Sen retreated dozens of metres, he finally managed to counteract the enormous force behind the Ninefold Fist Force. Before he could even relax, he saw that a flaming spear had already pierced towards him.

Wu Sen's pupils contracted as he hurriedly retreated backwards. He then loosened the grip on the broadsword in his right hand, throwing it away. After that, he gripped the shield with his hands and exerted his soulforce, causing the golden shield to appear in

front of him again.

“Ding!”

A clear striking sound echoed out. It seemed to be a single sound, yet it seemed to be a series of sounds as well....Bai Yunfei’s eyes suddenly brightened. At the same time, Wu Sen seemed to have felt something as well. His eyes narrowed to slits as he threw away the shield without any hesitation, then used all of his strength to jump backwards.

“Boom!”

Although his reaction was quick, the activation speed of the fire explosion was even quicker!

An extremely strong elemental fire exploded from the tip of the Firetipped Spear. The shield that had previously withstood the Ninefold Fist Force without any damage was torn apart like paper when facing the power of the fire explosion. If Wu Sen’s reaction wasn’t quick enough, his hands would’ve been destroyed along with the shield.

Although Wu Sen managed to survive the explosion, the price that he had to pay was the destruction of the shield. However, the following flame attack flung Wu Sen further up into the air, increasing the speed of his retreat by several times.

Wu Sen spat out a mouthful of blood while he was in midair. Even though he had sustained repeated losses, Wu Sen didn’t show any astonishment or fear. Instead, his expression turned increasingly berserk as he looked at Bai Yunfei, who was about to attack with his spear.

Wu Sen allowed his body to be knocked backwards as he suddenly raised his hands, quickly putting them in front of his chest while forming multiple strange hand seals. The undulations of his soulforce varied according to the speed of his hand signs, and his lips slightly moved as if he was softly muttering something.

“Chirp!”

The thunderbird suddenly let out a sharp whistle as it spun around in midair. After that, it dove down towards Bai Yunfei like a bolt of lightning. Its entire body was filled with elemental lightning. However, the undulations of the elemental lightning were chaotic. As its speed increased, the distance between it and Bai Yunfei decreased, and the elemental energies within its body turned even more chaotic, to the point where it was almost berserk.

At the same time, a reddish colour seemed to gradually appear in the thunderbird’s listless eyes!

“Self Detonation!”

Bai Yunfei had originally planned to ignore the thunderbird behind him to directly chase and attack Wu Sen. However, after he took a few steps forward, he suddenly sensed the chaotic elemental fluctuations behind him, as well as the soulforce of the thunderbird which was involuntarily expanding. Alarmed, he instantly understood the intentions of his opponent.

Wu Sen was actually making the thunderbird self-detonate in an attempt to make Bai Yunfei perish with it!

In an attempt to cause mutual destruction with an opponent, soul cultivators could detonate their essence seed, while soulbeasts could detonate their soul crystal. This would be their life’s last roar, which contained enormous power within it. Regardless of whether the enemy died or not, the one who had self-detonated would definitely die, and not even ashes would be left.

Wu Sen had clearly fallen into insanity. His heart was completely focused on killing Bai Yunfei to avenge his younger brother, so much so that he didn’t hesitate to sacrifice his fifth-tier soulbeast to cause mutual destruction with Bai Yunfei. Of course, he didn’t forget about the fact that there was a very high chance that he wasn’t a match for Bai Yunfei. In a drawn out fight, he would

definitely die. Thus, he had decided to chose this method to eliminate Bai Yunfei.

The very first thought that came to mind was to run.

Bai Yunfei clearly understood that he would be crippled, if not killed when hit by the self-detonation of a low fifth-tier soulbeast.

However, he seemed to have noticed something and raised his brow after shooting a glance towards Wu Sen, who was already twenty meters away. After sweeping his soulsense out again, his acute senses informed him that the speed of the thunderbird had decreased!

Why? Because Wu Sen was making sure that he had retreated to a sufficiently safe distance!

If the thunderbird's self detonation were to succeed, not only would he be heavily injured, it was very possible that his opponent would seize this opportunity to flee, or even to attack him! Bai Yunfei didn't know how strong the self-detonation would be, and he didn't know how his opponent would react. There were simply too many variables that he couldn't control.

Therefore, he only had the option of preventing the self destruction from occurring. On the other hand, Wu Sen was clearly controlling the self detonation of the thunderbird. Thus, he had to hurry up and kill Wu Sen before the thunderbird's self detonation!

He didn't have enough time to think things through. Bai Yunfei only hesitated for a moment, then he raised his head and glared at Wu Sen, who was already fifty or sixty metres away, with a resolute gaze. A light flashed through his eyes.

“I'll take the risk!”

Bai Yunfei ignored the approaching thunderbird. Instead, he lightly threw the Firetipped Spear forward, then used the Ninefold Fist Force to punch the shaft of the Firetipped Spear. The

Firetipped Spear slightly trembled, then shot towards Wu Sen like a fiery arrow.

Wu Sen's gaze had always been fixed on Bai Yunfei's movements. Although he was shocked by the fact that Bai Yunfei didn't dodge and instead continued to attack, Wu Sen was already prepared. As Wu Sen faced the incoming Firetipped Spear, he clenched his teeth and didn't change his hand signs. He forcefully twisted his body in midair, causing the Firetipped Spear to brush past his waist. Although he had lost his balance, he could severely injure Bai Yunfei as long as the thunderbird self-detonated before he landed.

A sinister smile appeared on the corner of Wu Sen's mouth as he changed his hand signs. Just as he was about to give out the final command to the thunderbird, he suddenly felt something tighten around his right ankle. He turned his head to look, suddenly discovering to his amazement that there was a golden rope that had coiled around his leg!

The rope was thin and perfectly straight, and had extended almost sixty metres. And the other end of the rope...was held in Bai Yunfei's hand!

Chapter 136: Astonishment

A flash of despair had crossed Wu Sen's face the very moment he saw the golden rope wrapped around his leg.

He recognised this golden rope. It was the the rope that attendant Li had previously given Fang Hao to allow him to catch the quickshade bird. He also knew that the golden rope had the power to expand and contract, but....since when could it extend this far?

Not allowing Wu Sen to continue his line of thoughts, the Compliant Rope gave off a brilliant gleam of golden light and began to contract rapidly. Combined with the mighty pull from Bai Yunfei, the two men were brought closer together just like before.

Initially, Wu Sen had been extremely happy to have dodged the thrown Fire-tipped Spear. He had believed that his opponent had thrown away the strongest soul armament he had and relied upon. An awfully foolish move in truth. But now that this had happened, the foolish one had been him! Bai Yunfei had an even stronger killing move to use!

Flame Winged Blade!

Just as the four-meter long blades shot past him, Wu Sen was just about to call for the detonation order once more when he came to the startling discovery that his left arm had already been separated from his main body. The pain had caused his mouth to open wide and reveal a splurt of blood. Dazed but unwilling to die, Wu Sen found his body engulfed into flames and then finally into ash.

After landing, Bai Yunfei hadn't dared to drop his guard and whirled around, only to see that the thunderbird had already closed within ten meters of him! But this time, the bird had already ceased in its forward flight and hovered there with a gentle flap of its wings. The chaotic energy that had been running rampant within its body had slowly started to ebb away as it slowly landed onto the ground without another movement after.

“Whew...”

Letting out a drawn out sigh, Bai Yunfei felt a wave of dizziness hit him. Unable to stop himself from taking two staggering steps backwards, Bai Yunfei plopped down to the ground onto his backside. This feeling of exhaustion had spread throughout his entire body and was a sign of soulforce exhaustion.

Swapping out for several accessories that would increase his energy, Bai Yunfei had been able to make a speedy recovery when combined with the +10 space ring that gave even more soulforce recovery speed.

A series of footsteps could be heard from his right side, prompting Bai Yunfei to tilt his head towards the direction. Upon seeing Jing Mingfeng approach, Bai Yunfei smiled, “Finished?” He asked.

“Of course. I was already finished when you killed off the first person and planned to help you out, but who would have knew that you’d finish your battle so quickly? You’ve practically killed two people without a break in your stride.” Jing Mingfeng smiled awkwardly as he shrugged his shoulders.

Looking over to where Jing Mingfeng had came from, he could see that just several hundred meters away, the bodies of Tai Ping and Fang Hao could be seen strewn about. Both of them had a grisly wound on their throats that continued to flow with fresh blood. On the faces of the two, their dying expressions had been a mixture of both astonishment and vacuousness. A single blade had slit their throats, causing a bloody but surefire death.

The pupils in Bai Yunfei’s eyes had contracted slightly from the sight, but he had recovered almost just as fast. Giving a slight nod to Jing Mingfeng, he closed his own eyes and continued to recover his own soulforce.

Prior to this, Jing Mingfeng had asked Bai Yunfei to deal with Fang Hao and Tai Ping himself, allowing Bai Yunfei to focus

completely on his own battle. Because of this wholehearted fixation, Bai Yunfei hadn't paid much attention to how Jing Mingfeng had killed the two, but he didn't wish to ask any questions about it. He knew that Jing Mingfeng was still hiding a myriad of secrets, but that hadn't been very important. At the very least, Bai Yunfei could admit that Jing Mingfeng was a person that deserved to be considered a friend worthy of his trust. And that was more than enough for him.

What Bai Yunfei didn't know, however, was the fact that Jing Mingfeng was currently facing a shock that was many times larger than Bai Yunfei.

"You killed two mid-stage Soul Sprites before, and now you've gone and killed another mid-stage Soul Sprite and late-stage Soul Sprite. Just how many soul armaments do you have, and what other secrets are you hiding...." Jing Mingfeng's face grew sour as he stared at the recuperating Bai Yunfei. His thoughts were a chaotic mess, and it was unsure to everyone except Jing Mingfeng himself to what he was thinking about.

Several minutes had past before Bai Yunfei had managed to recuperate enough soulforce to stand up once more. Surveying the scene around him, he whirled around to the Fire-tipped Spear which was practically fully embedded into the ground. As he pulled it out, he spoke out to Jing Mingfeng, "Let's clean up the battlefield the same way we did last time. We'll burn the corpses into ash."

Ye Tianwen first looked to Bai Yunfei who was storing away the daggers he had thrown into the thickets back into his space ring and then to Tianming and Jing Mingfeng who were scurrying about from one side to help out one another. Then, looking to messy but 'clean' area around them, Ye Tianwen reflected inwardly to himself with a pensive look. Turning to his uncle Ye Quan, he spoke, "Second uncle, have those four people we sensed earlier really died? They were all Soul Sprites; two of them were

early-stage, and the other two were middle-stage and late-stage, how could the four of them be killed so fast by two people?"

The two of them had arrived to the scene just several minutes after the battle had been over. But they had been able to sense the battle prior to their arrival. When they saw that Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng were both 'cleaning' up the area however, they had been at a loss for words. Ye Tianwen had even begun to wonder if his soulsense had been wrong, prompting him to ask Ye Quan to confirm his doubts.

Unlike Ye Tianwen, Ye Quan had been completely aware of the constant explosions of elemental energy as well as the four fluctuating soulforces that became extinguished almost instantaneously. While he had not been privy to the sight himself, he could make a clear conjecture of what happened. The one missing puzzle piece to his conjecture was the fact that he did not expect to see two be able to beat down and kill the four so fast. From the looks of the two, they were relatively unharmed as well....

Shaking his head, Ye Quan had noticed that Bai Yunfei, Jing Mingfeng and Tianming were already heading in his direction. With a low whisper, Ye Quan spoke, "Whatever the case, those two cannot be offended. While they were able to kill the men from the Beast Taming School and destroy any traces of their involvement, it....it wouldn't hurt to be cautious. If this brings ire to us from the Beast Taming School, then they wouldn't be satisfied with just murdering the entire house of Ye if it were ten times bigger."

Ye Tianwen nodded his head in agreement. "Yes, let's talk about this after we return home. Tianming has a relatively deep friendship with the two it seems, and we're not privy to the details either. We'll ask Tianming later tonight and plan what to do after...."

Within Gaoyi City in the mansion of the Ye.

It was already reaching midnight, but the halls were still lit so brightly that it felt as if it was still daytime in there.

When Bai Yunfei and the others walked into the halls, the very first that spoke was not in fact the middle-aged man that bore a striking resemblance to Tianming and sat at the topmost seat, but the cane-wielding white-haired elderly woman right next to him.

“Ming’er, my Ming’er, you’ve....you’ve finally returned! You’ve worried your granny to death, how have you suffered in the outside world? Just look at yourself, you’re so skinny now! Where in the world did you run off to....your father said those scoundrels from the Zhao were trying to kidnap you. Come here and let your granny look at you—are you injured? Don’t go sneaking out any more, the outside world is so dangerous, and you don’t know anything, so if anything were to....”

The old woman didn’t even look as if she had noticed Bai Yunfei or the others at all and headed straight for Tianming at the left side of the group. Latching onto his wrist tightly, the woman looked at him affectionately and began to speak one word after another in rapid succession. It had been rather hard to imagine that there would be such an elderly woman that would be capable of having the energy to speak for so long without pause. Even more impressive was that she continued to speak without ever paying attention to the people surrounding the two.

An impatient look appeared on Tianming’s face as he pushed away the woman’s hand with discontent, “Granny, how many times did I tell you, don’t treat me like a seven-year old anymore. Every single time, you’re like this, how annoying....”

“Tianming!” Bai Yunfei rebuked with a low voice and furrowed eyebrows.

“Ah?” Startled, Tianming turned to look at Bai Yunfei in confusion.

“Did you forget what I told you before?”

“I....I didn’t.” Tianming was silent for a moment before a thought had hit him. Speaking softly, he said, “Of all the virtues, filial piety is the most important. Brother Bai, I didn’t forget, sorry....”

Bai Yunfei shook his head, “You shouldn’t be apologizing to me.”

“Yes....” Tianming turned back to the older woman in front of him with a bowed head. “Grandma, I’m sorry. I’ve made you worried. I won’t be as unruly like this in the future....”

As soon as he spoke these words, everyone had been stunned. Everyone from the Ye had stared at Tianming with a gaping mouth as if they witnessed something completely unbelievable.

Chapter 137: The House of Ye

“Yes....” Tianming turned back to the older woman in front of him with a bowed head. “Grandma, I’m sorry. I’ve made you worried. I won’t be as unruly like this in the future....”

As soon as he spoke these words, everyone had been stunned. Everyone from the Ye had stared at Tianming with a gaping mouth as if they witnessed something completely unbelievable.

The old woman had been stunned for a very long time, but it had been her to be the very first one to gather her wits. Doing away with the previous prattle she had been doing before, she instead rubbed the top of Tianming’s head affectionately and spoke, “Good, good! My....my Ming’er has grown up now. In the future, your grandma won’t worry as much now....”

With a smile, she nodded her head to Bai Yunfei first before looking to Ye Quan and his group, “Is there anymore you wish to say? If not, then this old woman will be going first to rest.”

When the old woman left the halls along with her servants, Tianming had hesitated for a moment before turning to look at the middle-aged man and the married woman next to him. Bowing his head, he spoke, “Father, mother, I’m home....”

Seeing just how drastic the change that seemed to have met Tianming was, the dignified look on Ye Ting’s face had revealed just a sliver of a smile on it. Unlike in the past where he would have scolded Tianming, Ye Ting had instead nodded his head slightly, “Yes. As long as you return, all is well. You must remind yourself to be more careful in the future. There has been plenty of trouble for our family as of late, you shouldn’t add more to it....”

With that said, he turned to look at Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng. Politely, he spoke, “And these two are...?”

“Oh, father, let me introduce them to you.” Seeing that he hadn’t

been scolded, Tianming seemed to relax just a bit before he had hurried to answer his father. “This is brother Bai Yunfei, and this is brother Jing Mingfeng. The two of them are friends that I came to meet in my travel. They’re really amazing! They’ve been looking after me when we were traveling, and it was only because of these two that I wasn’t captured by the Zhao earlier....”

“Oh?” Ye Ting raised his brow. Seeing that Ye Quan was nodding at him, the smile on his face became even bigger as he said, “Since it’s like this, I’m truly too grateful for these two young heroes. It is truly too fortunate for my disappointing son to have met you two. If you two have any needs within Gaoyi City, don’t hesitate to let me know. As long as my house of Ye can do it, we definitely won’t decline to!”

Jing Mingfeng shrugged his shoulders and shot a glance at Bai Yunfei. This action meant: “I’m too lazy, you can talk.”

“The words of the master of the house of Ye area too serious. I am merely a traveller that is passing through this area, and will leave soon. I don’t have any particular wants.” It was obvious that Ye Quan and the others had something to discuss. Thus, Bai Yunfei didn’t say anything more. After thinking for awhile, he said: “I’ve used up quite a bit of my energy during that previous fight. May I ask for some accommodations from the master of the house of Ye? I would like to rest a bit earlier...”

Ye Ting was stunned. Shortly after, he nodded his head and said: “Sure, there’s naturally no problem with that! A’Fu, take the two young heroes to the guest room in the northern courtyard! Serve them well, and do not neglect them!”

After the two left, everyone else was dismissed. Only Ye Ting, Ye Quan, Ye Tianwen, and Tianming were left in the great hall.

Ye Ting first questioned Ye Quan about the issue that had occurred after they had left the city. Then, he detailedly inquired Tianming about the situation that had occurred to him after

leaving the city, as well as Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng's situations.

After Tianming finished speaking, everyone turned silent for a period of time.

After a long time, Ye Ting started speaking: "First, let's ignore the identities of those two. We already owe them a favour because of their rescuing of Tianming. Furthermore, they have inadvertently helped us a lot by killing the people of the Beast Taming School, as well as snatching the fifth-tier soulbeast that should have been passed to the house of Zhao. In addition to that, these two aren't weak. If they can help our house of Ye during the fight against the house of Zhao, our chances of victory will increase..."

"Yeah. However, I don't think we should directly ask them for help. After all, our house of Ye owes them a favour, and being too rude wouldn't be good." Ye Tianwen followed up and said, "During the following days, we should let Tianming receive them. From what Bai Yunfei said, he wouldn't be staying here for a long time. Thus, we should do our best to deepen our relationship with him during this period of time, and let nature run its course."

Tianming remained silent for a while. Then, he spoke with a trace of hesitation: "Father, is the house of Zhao really suppressing us, just like this? Are we going to let them be so unreasonable and not do anything about it?"

"With the mountain-like Beast Taming School suppressing us, what chance do we have?" Ye Tianwen helplessly shook his head and said, "Although our house is considered a big clan within Gaoyi City, we're not even considered as a small clan within the entire continent. Even though the person who came from the Beast Taming School is only a mid-stage Soul Ancestor, we don't have any power to resist him at all...If father manages to breakthrough into the Soul Ancestor realm, we might have the ability to contend with him. However..."

“Breaking into the Soul Ancestor realm is easier said than done...” Ye Ting sighed, “I’ve already been stuck in the peak of the Soul Sprite realm for a year. I’m only a step away from the Soul Ancestor realm, but that step is as far as the heavens. No matter how hard I try, I don’t even have the slightest chance of achieving a breakthrough. If I don’t obtain an opportunity, I won’t be able to breakthrough, even if another few years pass...”

Tianming seemed to understand, yet not understand his father’s words. He wasn’t very familiar with the world of soul cultivators, and he didn’t understand why his father was so scared of the Beast Taming School. In his mind, his Brother Bai and Brother Jing managed to easily fend off the people from the Beast Taming School when they were saving the quickshade bird; When they met the people from the Beast Taming School for a second time, his Brother Bai and the others managed to directly kill almost ten of them—they weren’t that scary.

“That’s enough. Tianming, I think you’re tired as well? Go back and rest. Tomorrow, take the two guests to have some fun in the city, since that’s what you’re an expert in...” Ye Ting looked at the pondering Tianming and slightly smiled. It wasn’t clear whether his last words were disparaging or joking.

“Oh, sure. Then, I’ll go and talk to mother for a while before resting.” Tianming nodded his head and left.

As Ye Ting looked at Tianming leave the hall, a trace of gratification appeared in his eyes. He was deeply moved as he said: “This time, Tianming has truly matured after leaving...”

“Yeah, he’s actually learned to hide some secrets when talking to other people.” Ye Quan lightly nodded his head and let out a smile. Actually, the three people could tell that Tianming was hiding some secrets when talking about Bai Yunfei and the others. However, they didn’t point it out.

“Hehe, this also means that he’s made some trustworthy friends,

no? It also means that Tianming has grown up. In the future, we won't have to be so worried anymore." Ye Tianwen also smiled as he spoke.

After talking about the issue of Tianming, Ye Ting stopped smiling as he spoke to Ye Quan: "Second brother, what do you think...about these two visitors?"

Ye Quan paused for a moment before saying: "They have many secrets. They're absolutely not normal soul cultivators."

After thinking for a while, Ye Ting was still somewhat unconvinced as he asked: "They...did they truly kill those people from the Beast Taming School?"

"Yeah, it shouldn't be wrong. The first reason is because Tianming said it, while the second reason is because I personally sensed it." Ye Quan nodded his head as he answered.

"If that's the case, I'm relieved..." Ye Ting lightly laughed and had a slight feeling of schadenfreude as he said, "Humph, Zhao Chuan is dead, and the Beast Taming School has lost many people. I think that the house of Zhao should stop making moves for a while? When Zhao Xing finds out, I'm sure that his expression will be ugly..."

Chapter 138: Rest

Zhao Xing's current expression wasn't just ugly—it was extremely hideous.

In contrast to the house of Ye, the halls of the house of Zhao was far more somber in atmosphere. Just vaguely, two shadows could be seen seated within the halls; it was the head of the Zhao, Zhao Xing and attendant Li Chen from the Beast Taming School.

From dusk to midnight, the two of them had been drinking tea cup after cup as they waited for their men to return after kidnapping Ye Tianming and the quickshade bird. But the group never returned. Zhao Xing had been besides himself and continued to look outside the area every so often in anxiety. Li Chen himself was no longer calm himself and looked as if the expression on his face had hardened. Even as he stroked the three-tailed cat, the speed in which he was doing so was noticeably faster than before as if expressing the irritation in his mind.

"Attendant Li, it's been....long enough now, why have they not returned yet? Perhaps something has happened? Perhaps the Ye has already done something in secret?" Zhao Xing could hold it in no longer and looked to Li Chen as he asked.

"What are you panicking about? They could already be on the road back now. You are the head of the household and yet you have no patience at all. Pah! Your family is beyond help...." Li Chen spoke with discontent when he glanced over at him. But even with that, one could tell that his expression on his face was not as calm as before.

Zhao Xing's face had flushed with anger, but he had managed to keep his tongue in check and stared silently at the entrance to the hall.

Then—the sounds of footsteps could be heard approaching the halls, causing Zhao Xing's face to brighten up. However, when he

saw that the faces of these newcomers were not at all the same ones of the people who were dispatched earlier, a look of worry crossed his face again. Before they could even bow to him in greeting, Zhao Xing had asked in a hurry, “Well? Did you find caretaker Zhao and the others?”

“My lord, we have come with a report. Signs of a skirmish can be seen on the outskirts of the city near the hills, but no traces of caretaker Zhao can be seen. Furthermore....we have lost contact with the people meant to observe them in secret. Their whereabouts are currently unknown....”

The ones giving the report had left the halls shortly after reporting in, allowing Zhao Xing to collapse onto his chair with a dazed look. If it were only just Zhao Chuan that was missing, that could be because he was still in hot pursuit of Ye Tianming. But if the ones assigned to observe Zhao Chuan were gone as well, then it could only mean that something must have happened to them all..... “But, but how could that be....? Our intelligence said that only two other youths were traveling with Ye Tianming. The Ye had only sent people after Ye Tianming after Zhao Chuan left, meaning there should have been more than enough time for him to capture Ye Tianming before anything could happen. So just why....”

The more Zhao Xing thought about it, the more he started to fidget. Since everyone else aside from Zhao Chuan was from the Beast Taming School, Zhao Xing was just opening his mouth to ask Chen Li what was going on when Li Chen gave a small start. Extending his right arm out, a small dark shadow suddenly shot forth from the entrance and onto his palm, revealing the shadow to be a small black rat.

The rat had looked at Li Chen with its small red eyes before letting out two emotionless squeaks and coming to a stop in his hand.

The expression on Li Chen’s face had immediately solidified into

an even more unsightly look. Even his body was starting to twitch slightly—he had sent this small rat out to trail behind Wu Sen earlier. As a soulbeast, it was without much power and was incapable of passing along a detailed report of what happened, but a vague description could still be gained from it. Wu Sen and the others had been killed.

“Lord Zhao, I believe that our plans will have to be changed....”

And now, we return to a luxurious guest room within the northern courtyard of the house of Ye.

From on top of his spacious and soft bed, Bai Yunfei could be seen staring at the rings in front of him with worry.

These special rings were the space rings specifically worn by the people from the Beast Taming School. Jing Mingfeng had appropriated the ones that Fang Hao and Tai Ping had worn, saying that it was his ‘spoils of war’. These rings in particular were modified so that they could only carry around the soulbeast puppets, so they were useless to Jing Mingfeng and were thus given to Bai Yunfei to keep.

“If brother Hong Yin was here, I could give these to him. But right now....I’ll have to carry it in the meanwhile. These space rings are strange though, I can’t store them in my own space rings, meaning I have to carry them on my own person. But that’s annoying. Sigh, if only there was some sort of equipment that could let me store space rings too....”

Shaking his head, Bai Yunfei had then placed all of the rings within an embroidered bag before checking on his own ‘spoils of war’: Several ordinary space rings, the Heart Protecting Mirror with a big and small hole through it. There were also the low-rare grade equipment: the watermelon slice-shaped short blade, and the other incomplete soul armaments and currency.

“How unfortunate that golden shield was destroyed. That was probably a middle-rare grade equipment, sigh....”

Classifying the items one by one, Bai Yunfei had stored everything away without bothering to upgrade them. Instead, of sitting down to cultivate, he had instead laid back onto his bed with both hands cradling his head so he could rest and think of what to do in the future.

“I didn’t leave behind any evidence, so the Beast Taming School shouldn’t know it’s me that killed off their students. But still, I’m more or less enemies with the school now. It’d be wise for me to be careful and not show off any of these items so no one from the Beast Taming School will see them...”

The very first thought that had came to mind was the Beast Taming School. Killing those tamers had been a simple task, but Bai Yunfei had not become so arrogant as to look down onto a school that was within the top ten in this world. It went without saying that he knew that should he come across a Soul Ancestor like the one in Cuiliu City or a perhaps a Soul Exalt from the Beast Taming School, protecting his life would be an incredibly difficult one.

The Zhao had never been a thought for concern for him on the other hand. The Zhao didn’t know who he was, and so he could stay within Gaoyi City for a good four or five days before leaving. Whether it was fight or flight, it all depended on his own mood.

“Well, I should go pay a visit to the Liu as well...”

“I wonder how miss Xinyun is. There were only four beast tamers back then, so they should be completely safe by now. I wonder if I’ll be able to see them again....”

Early the next morning, Bai Yunfei had barely just walked out of his room when he saw that Jing Mingfeng and Tianming were already waiting in the courtyard.

In Jing Mingfeng’s hand was an item that looked like a dagger, but at the same time, it did not. It was closer to a short blade on one side, but on the other side was a sawtooth design. This oddity

of a weapon was being closely studied by both Jing Mingfeng and Tianming before Bai Yunfei could identify it as the soul armament that they had taken from Tai Ping.

“Brother Bai, you’re up? I was just about to call you up! Did you rest well last night? There was nothing wrong with your stay, right? Let me know and I’ll have some servants take care of it!” Tianming had smiled when he saw Bai Yunfei approach them.

“Ah, yes, nothing was wrong. It was quite a nice night.” Bai Yunfei nodded his head before turning to speak to Jing Mingfeng. “It’s best to not take out these items as you will anymore. Do you want to let everyone know it was us that killed the ones from the Beast Taming School?”

“Haha, relax, I know.” Jing Mingfeng chuckled before storing the soul armament away from Tianming’s admiring eyes.

After washing their face and teeth, the trio had gone off to eat breakfast. To be polite, Bai Yunfei had gone off to pay his respects to Ye Ting and made conversation for a good while. As soon as the conversation was over, he had left the house so that Tianming could take him and Jing Mingfeng around the city to go purchase a few things.

Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng couldn’t help but laugh when they looked at how excited and lively Tianming was as they walked through the flourishing streets of the city. Everywhere they went, Tianming had went off onto a long and wordy explanation of what was good in the area, and what places had the best things to do.

“Well now, Tianming, since you can talk so much about these ‘fun’ places, you must be extremely familiar with them. How amazing you are!” Jing Mingfeng couldn’t help but tease him.

But Tianming had taken this ‘compliment’ in stride. Flinging his hair back, Tianming spoke with an air of arrogance, “Well of course! My nickname in Gaoyi City as the ‘Duke of Play’ isn’t in vain you know....”

“Hm? ‘Duke of Play’? What’s that?” Jing Mingfeng was baffled.

“‘Duke of Play’ refers to me, not a thing!” Tianming had halted in his speech as if he thought he had said something wrong for a moment before continuing on with it, “I’m not saying I’m good for nothing, I’m saying that I’m known as one of the ‘Four Dukes’ of Gaoyi City! The ‘Duke of Play’ is my nickname!”

“Four Dukes of Gaoyi? What’s that?”

“It means we’re the four young lords really.” Tianming explained. “In Gaoyi City, there is the house of Liu, Ye, and Zhao. Then there’s also the lord of the city’s son. Each one of us have some sort of nickname to go with us, kind of like the ‘Four Lords of the Capital’ in the capital.

“Hold on, where did these ‘Four Lords of the Capital’ suddenly come from?” Jing Mingfeng blurted out in curiosity.

Bai Yunfei’s curiosity had been piqued as well when heard the word ‘capital’. “Tianming,” He started. “Are these ‘Four Lords of the Capital’ also the sons of some four major households? Can you tell us more about it?”

Chapter 139: Four Lords of the Capital

Bai Yunfei's curiosity had been piqued as well when heard the word 'capital'. "Tianming," He started. "Are these 'Four Lords of the Capital' also the sons of some four major households? Can you tell us more about it?"

"No way! You've never heard of the Four Lords? They're the idols of our generation!" Tianming had spoken in adoration. It would appear that he held these 'Four Lords of the Capital' on a high pedestal.

"The Four Lords of the Capital, Wine, Sex, Avarice, and Temper!"

It had been with great grandeur that Tianming spoke these eleven words. If they didn't know any better, then anyone would have thought that Tianming himself was one of these four princes.

"Their titles refer to them being the four young heroes of the capital's four great houses: The Zheng, the Chen, the Jin, and the Huang. Of the four, the house of Zheng is the most prominent due to them also being known as one of the 'Five Great Houses'. The other three might not be a part of the 'Five Great Houses', but they are still considered superpowers with enough influence to themselves."

Bai Yunfei's eyebrows had risen when he heard mention of the Zheng. But instead of interrupting Tianming, Bai Yunfei had allowed for him to continue speaking.

"There's Chen Qiantan, the 'Wine Lord' of the house of Chen. Legends has it that when he was born, he was basked in a pool of wine poured from a thousand jars. He loves wine as much as his own life, and that wine practically never stops coming into his mouth. He drinks so much that he's practically always in a drunken state. The secret family art of his, the 'Drunken Fist' is known as a soul skill that is 'unbeatable' in close combat.

“In the house of Zheng, there’s the ‘Sex Prince’, Zheng Kai. In his family, he’s the second eldest and is sometimes known as the ‘Second Prince of Zheng’. He says that he is like the ‘jade tree that can withstand wind and prevail over Pan Yue in beauty’ while also being as capable as the ‘pear blossom that pushes down the crabapple.’ Or in other words, he calls himself the ‘Godhand of spreading the flower’. Although his nickname is the ‘Sex Lord’, it isn’t an insult. He is known to be a lustful person, but he never steals away any woman, they all follow him willingly. It’s even said that his personal goal in life is to ‘pick up every beauty in the world and leave no girl behind for anyone to pick up’. Because of his absolute valor, he’s seen as the enemy of man while also being the object of envy and admiration of them all.

TL Note: The poet Su Shi had once ridiculed his fellow poet Zhang Xian after marrying a wife with over seventy years apart in age difference in a poem, saying that even a pear blossom could ‘push’ down the crabapple.

“From the house of Jin, there’s there’s the ‘Wealth Lord’, Jin Manlou. At the tender age of twenty, he was already in charge of the finances of the entire household—and better than the previous generation to boot. Their wealth has grown so large that it could rival a country and spend money as if it were water. As long as the problem can be solved with money, then it isn’t a problem as far as he’s concerned. Not only that, Jin Manlou is also the most magnanimous philanthropist in the entire empire. Wherever he does business, there will never be any beggars.

“And then there’s the ‘Temper Lord’, Huang Bin of the house of Huang. As a moral and upright person, his heroism could stand aloft over the clouds. He has always been a straightforward and upright person that outs the rich and supports the poor. Of the four lords, he is the most respected one with countless friends and thousands of visitors—many of them being strong in their own right. Even more amazing is his talent; it’s something you can only

see once every hundred years! At the age of twenty-four, he has already become a Soul Ancestor!

“These four are the most outstanding ones of their generation in the capital. Practically every other young lord in the capital follow these four, though, the young ones of the royal family are an exception of course. They are after all princes that cannot be ‘discussed’ about so easily.”

Tianming had spoken confidently as he gave a general introduction of the ‘Four Lords of the Capital’ to Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng. It was as if his ‘lecturing’ to his older brothers was something to be extremely pleased about.

“Zheng Kai....” Bai Yunfei turned his head down just slightly in befuddlement. He hadn’t expected to hear his name here, but.... “Sex Lord? Is he really some sort of wanton and lecherous young master of a man?” Bai Yunfei was simply unable to make the connection between the mysterious youth that had helped him in the coliseum of Talus City way back then and the ‘Sex Lord’ that Tianming was talking about. “Maybe it’s coincidence that they have the same name?”

“Pft! What ‘Four Lords of the Capital’, why do I feel annoyed about that? That ‘Sex Lord’ most especially! For some reason, I have the desire to beat him up....” In the midst of Bai Yunfei’s pondering, Jing Mingfeng had spoke out already with a rather discontent tone. “Screw it, they’re nothing more than the next generation that rely on their families and parents! Brother, if I want to be famous, then I’d be known throughout the entire world instead! With a greater title than theirs no less!”

Bai Yunfei had been unable to stop himself from poking fun at him, “Yea, that’s right. No one can beat you as the most handsome person ever. Aren’t you the Chivalrous Thief? I think your nickname should be ‘Bandit Chief’ instead.”

TL Note: This nickname is 盜帅 in Chinese, with the second

character meaning Handsome or Chief. It is also the nickname of Chu Liuxiang from Gu Long's novel of the same name.

In truth, Bai Yunfei was actually making fun of the fact that Jing Mingfeng made it a habit to change his appearance every so often. It had been done so much that Bai Yunfei was actually unsure or not if this current appearance of Jing Mingfeng was his true appearance. But the insinuation had not been heard, or perhaps the latter had only been paying attention to the very last part of the sentence.

“‘Bandit Chief’? Shit, Ol’Bai, you’re a damn genius if you could come out with such an imperious nickname like that!” Jing Mingfeng had thought ‘seriously’ for a few moments before unexpectedly speaking out with a deadpan declaration, “I’ve decided! When the great me travels the world later on, I’ll be using that nickname!”

And thus, the nickname of ‘Bandit Chief’ that would later rock the world was born from a joke that Bai Yunfei had randomly tossed out....Of course, if Jing Mingfeng were to describe it, he’d say—“This is actually a hobby of mine....”

Bai Yunfei didn’t know whether to laugh or cry when he saw the earnest-looking Jing Mingfeng. Instead, he shook his head helplessly for a moment before turning back to Tianming, “Ah, Tianming, you said the ‘Four Lords of the Capital’ refer to ‘Wine, Sex, Avarice and Temper’. Then as the ‘Four Dukes of Gaoyi’, what nicknames do you have?”

“Eating, Drinking, Playing, and Pleasure.”

Bai Yunfei stared blankly at him. He had been at a loss of how to respond to him. Meanwhile, Jing Mingfeng had nearly stumbled into the bosom of a middle-aged woman as he was lost in his delusions of becoming the world-famous ‘Bandit Chief’.

Jing Mingfeng looked at Tianming with widened eyes, “What did you say? Say it one more time....Eating, Drinking, Playing and

Pleasure?”

“Yeah....” Tianming had been slightly embarrassed when he replied, “It....really doesn’t sounds as cool as ‘Wine, Sex, Avarice, and Temper’, but we were only just playing around when we made it up....”

Jing Mingfeng had looked at Tianming with a hint of admiration, “Hehe, I think that your group is pretty interesting actually. Say, didn’t you say you were the ‘Duke of Play’ as one of the four dukes?”

“Yeah. In the past, I spent the entire day playing around and was pretty much interested in any sort of fun activities. So I earned that nickname as a result.” Tianming explained bashfully.

“The ‘Duke of Eat’ refers to the fatty from the Zhao, Zhao Liang. That guy’s always eating some sort of exotic delicacy or lavish meal at any given time. One time, he ate an entire roasted suckling pig that weighed around fifty kilograms....the biggest restaurant in Gaoyi City, the “Aroma Delicacy”, is owned by him.

“The ‘Duke of Drink’ is the third son of the house of Liu, Liu Shun. He’s similar to the ‘Wine Lord’ from the capital. He’s always drinking and loves to get drunk. Good or bad, he’s done it all. Onetime, he streaked through the streets naked, but then he was stopped by one of his retainers afterwards...”

“The ‘Duke of Pleasure’ is the second son of the ruler of the city, Zhou Hui. He’s crass and lecherous. As a regular of the ‘House of Spring Pleasures’, he spends the entirety of his day trying to have sex with women. By now, he has already seven concubines at the age of twenty-six.”

Bai Yunfei had been speechless once more when heard Tianming introduce them all—just what kind of people are they?

He had been secretly glad that Tianming represented the ‘Play’ of the four. If the four of them were ‘Dining, Wining, Whoring and

Gambling', then that would be just tragic....

For a while, Jing Mingfeng had been silent before he gave a thumbs up to Tianming, "You're still screwed!"

TL Note:

In the chapter, the Four Lords of the Capital are nicknamed as "Wine, Sex, Avarice, and Temper". This is an idiom referring to the cardinal vices.

As for the Four Dukes of Gaoyi City, their nicknames are based off the idiom "Eat, drink, and be merry." In other words, to forget about everything else and focus on the pleasures of life.

Bai Yunfei talks about it's good that they weren't nicknamed "Dining, Wining, Whoring and Gambling". This is an idiom meaning to live a life of dissipation.

Chapter 140: Stand to Watch

In the afternoon, Bai Yunfei didn't follow Tianming and Jing Mingfeng to the 'Unique Beast Garden' that was 'super-duper fun' according to Tianming. Instead, he slowly walked around the streets of Gaoyi City by himself, buying some necessities or interesting things.

It had been with some slight disappointment when Bai Yunfei walked out from one of the weapons store. Gaoyi City wasn't a big city by any stretch of the word, and the stores he had passed by already were very low on Superior grade equipment. Incomplete soul armaments were practically non-existent since only one store had one of those. But in Bai Yunfei's opinion, that store was nothing more than your run-of-the-mill shop where an incomplete soul armaments would be considered the store's treasure. As such, this incomplete soul armaments would be priced at an exorbitantly high price that would leave Bai Yunfei dumbfounded.

Unbeknownst to Bai Yunfei, he somehow managed to travel throughout the majority of the bustling streets of Gaoyi City during his stop-and-go shopping spree. Eventually, he noticed the darkness around him and as he looked up, noticed that it was almost evening. Feeling that he travelled far enough, he prepared for his return to the mansion of the House of Ye.

"Yes, this road is kinda familiar. This should be the way to go back? Yeah, it shouldn't be wrong..."

After walking for half an hour, Bai Yunfei felt that he should be approaching his destination soon, but he had been having this feeling for more than twenty minutes now, yet he still hadn't seen the walls of the house of Ye.

"I was walking around and looking at all of the stores, but I actually forgot to remember the direction back. I'm actually lost in this city, this is just too embarrassing..." Bai Yunfei felt ashamed

then investigated further. Eventually, he embarrassingly pulled aside a passerby to ask him the directions to the house of Ye. After all, the house of Ye was one of the three great houses of Gaoyi City, and its location was known to everyone.

“You want to go to the house of Ye?” A random passerby glanced at the smiling youth garbed in ordinary street-clothes. Curious, he asked, “The Ye are over on west, why on earth did you come running over to the northern street?”

Inquiring to each new person every few turns around the streets, Bai Yunfei felt like wiping off his sweat before turning onto the streets next to him.

After turning the corner, Bai Yunfei could see a two-storied restaurant. Just as he was about to enter the building, a sudden commotion could be heard from the interior. In the next moment, a group of people came clambering out from the entrance as if they would be caught up in trouble if they were too slow.

But after they ran outside the restaurant, they clustered together at a place a few dozen metres away from the restaurant. The looks of fear on their faces transformed into looks of curiosity...and they actually began to wait with anticipation.

The people who were originally outside were baffled by this. But when the ones who ran out from the restaurant whispered several words to them in a quiet whisper, everyone had gathered together. Within half a minute, over a hundred people were gathered outside the entrance of the restaurant.

“Hey, what do you think the ‘Duke of Drink’ will do this time?”

“Who knows? Can anyone really guess what this drunkard is thinking about?”

“You’re right, the last time he was drunk, he was making out with a pig of a woman out on the streets! The attendants he had with him were all beaten up too, leaving the bodyguards no other

choice but to knock him out. You think he's going to start the performance out on the streets this time?"

"Hehe, he climbed up to the top of the restaurant to sing out loud for an entire hour the time before that. It wasn't bad—in fact—it was better than the opera singer that lives next to me."

"I still love the time where he was tossing money away, all those shining silver coins! If only he'd do it again...."

"What about that one time he rented out the entire House of Spring Pleasures and had all the girls dance out on the streets? Tsk, that was quite the sight to see! I heard after that day, the clients over there doubled...."

"Don't get too close though. That one stupid gangster tried to extort some protection fees from him while he was in one of his drunk moods. That guy was practically beaten senseless, and the other people around him too...."

"What about that time he threw out all those leftovers at people...."

"Or that time he streaked naked through the city...."

Bai Yunfei raised the corner of his mouth as he heard the discussion going on around him. He was wondering just what was going on, but he understood now—These people were all waiting for the person upstairs, who was about to become madly drunk, to give a good show—And the person in question was the person that Tianming talked about. Out of 'Four Dukes of Gaoyi City', the person who was addicted to drinking alcohol, the 'Duke of Drink' Liu Shun.

"I didn't think I'd meet him here out of the blue; and during one of his drunk moments no less. From what these people are saying, his personality while drunk isn't the best..."

Bai Yunfei had been stuck within the crowd, and because of his curiosity, he was loathed to leave. Sticking around the crowd, he

turned his head up to look at what was going on on the second floor of the restaurant.

To stand around and watch was a natural trait of a human being. Curiosity was something that even Bai Yunfei wasn't exempt from. Thus, he too became one of the people within the crowd.

"Pow!"

A wine jug had been thrown out from the second floor, shattering upon contact and startling the people down below.

"Stop bothering me! I'm not drunk! I just want to go the toilet! Why're you following me around for, I don't like being watched like this!"

One could tell the sound that just echoed out from the second floor belonged to that of a drunk person. Then, the sounds of tables, chairs, bowls, and plates falling to the ground could be heard. A gorgeously-clothed youth slightly staggered as he appeared by the railings of the second floor, and his originally elegant hairstyle had become somewhat disheveled. The front part of clothing that covered his chest was slightly wet, and he let out a drunken belch. After all that, he leaned on the second floor's railings and started undoing his waistband.

From his earlier words, one could tell that he was really trying to try and take off his pants to urinate!

He probably wanted to use the restroom, but he wasn't able to clearly tell the directions under his drunken stupor. Thus, he walked straight to the balcony, and prevented his subordinates from stopping him. He said that he didn't want to be watched while urinating, but he didn't know that there were more than a hundred people below waiting for a good show to happen—Although quite a lot of girls had already shied their faces away, there were still a large amount of bold ones that secretly tried to look from the gaps between their fingers. After all, the 'thing' of the 'Duke of Drink' wasn't so easily seen.

“No way...how brave is he?” Bai Yunfei had thought with admiration.

If he really did take off his pants, then the Liu would lose plenty of face from this. Because of that, plenty of people had rushed forward to try and stop Liu Shun from doing so.

“So you want to control even my pissing! Screw off!” Liu Shun flew off into a rage as he kicked the people around him. Turning around to continue unbuckling his pants, he suddenly saw the several hundreds of people down below the balcony.

“F*cking hell! why are there so many people in this toilet?”

His words caused everyone to burst out in laughter. After that, Liu Shun stopped undoing his pants. This relieved his bodyguard Su Dong, who was prepared to stop him, while disappointing the onlooking crowd below.

But who would have known that Liu Shun would look over the crowd with a sudden face of fury. Kicking a giant hole in the balcony railings in front of him, he cursed out, “F*ck your grandpa! You going to fight me for this toilet? Men! Tear off one of their balls now!”

As soon as he spoke, the faces of everyone down below had paled instantly. Within a second, everyone had dispersed. The males had not wanted their balls to be ripped away, and the girls had naturally no balls to take away in the first place, but they had all run away all the same. They all knew that when Liu Shun was drunk like this, whatever he said and whatever he said he would do —no one would stop him.

Bai Yunfei hadn’t known about this however, and it was for that reason why he didn’t run away along with the crowd. He hadn’t even thought twice about just why the crowd around him had disappeared all at once—such a speed like this would make it seem as if everyone knew how to use the Wave Treading Steps.

“Men! Hurry up and do as I say! F*cking hell, why did they all run? Ehh? What’s this? There’s still one person. Haha, then allow the great I to teach you a lesson!”

As Bai Yunfei was distracted, Liu Shun directly jumped off from the second floor with a single leap. With a ‘bang’ sound, he landed on the ground. Then, he stood up as if nothing had happened and glared at Bai Yunfei. He shouted: “Brat, don’t run! Watch how the great I will tear your balls off and parade you through the streets!”

Recovering from his daze, the corners to Bai Yunfei’s mouth twitched. He had been slightly mortified, and he didn’t know what to say either.

Was he not just watching the spectacle a moment ago? So why was he caught up in this mess now?”

Chapter 141: Threefold Slap

Bai Yunfei had seen the way Liu Shun was moving on over towards him. Despite the ‘bravado’ he was trying to put up, his staggering had been anything but that, leaving Bai Yunfei to shake his head helplessly.

He knew that Liu Shun was only at the late-stage Soul Personage realm from the soulforce he released. A mere Soul Personage wasn’t something that he would take seriously. Even if Liu Shun was a young master of a big family, he wouldn’t be scared to the point of running away because of this. He didn’t want to cause trouble, but he wasn’t afraid of getting into trouble.

“But....he’s still someone from the Liu. Since I’m going to pay them a visit tomorrow, it wouldn’t be a good idea to teach this guy a lesson. Anyhow, the Liu are a part of the Wood School, so I shouldn’t worsen my relationship with them.” Bai Yunfei thought for a while, and decided not to bicker with this drunkard in front of him. He raised his head to look at the restaurant’s second floor, hoping that those servants would drag away their young master. Once they did that, this situation would be settled as well.

But there had been something that caused him to narrow his eyes when he looked up: the attendants of Liu Shun had standing there just watching him—as long as Liu Shun didn’t embarrass himself, they wouldn’t move a finger to stop him from doing anything else. It had in fact looked liked they were waiting for a good show to start for them to enjoy.

He had been slightly angry at that. Turning his eye to look at the rather serious-looking middle-aged man behind the attendants, Bai Yunfei could note that his eyes were those of a vigilant man and had the ramrod back to accompany it.

Su Dong was Liu Shun’s mid-stage Soul Warrior bodyguard and was considered among of the stronger men of Gaoyi City. When it

came to this drinking enthusiast of a charge, he was rather helpless. No matter what, Liu Shun was still the young master he was in charge of protecting, so no matter how drunk Liu Shun got, he was allowed to do so in his own time. So as long as Liu Shun didn't do anything too over the top, Su Dong would not interfere.

He didn't really care about this 'unfortunate' youth that was about to be shouted at by the young master. In his opinion, the young master wouldn't mess around to the point of causing someone's death, even though he turned crazy after drinking. If worst comes to worst, he could just give this person a lump sum to settle this matter afterwards.

It had been to his astonishment that this young person had met Liu Shun without fear. When he had looked at the young man, the young man had actually looked back at him as well.

In a split second, Su Dong's heart had been gripped with fear and cold sweat began to seep out from his forehead.

"Are you not going to stop your young master?" In that one moment, the youth had spoke out with a voice of indifference. But despite that, it had been very audible to Su dong's ears.

Su Dong didn't even have the time to rub the sweat off his forehead as he shivered and turned around. Without even hesitating, he pushed away the few people in front of him and jumped down from the second floor.

"An expert—a Soul Sprite no less! Since when did Gaoyi City have such a person like this? And why did it have to be the young master that provoked him!" Su Dong's heart was pounding from shock. The moment he landed on the ground below, Su Dong was already running up to Liu Shun in an attempt to stop him from doing anything more to offend this person.

Quickly running up to Liu Shun who was just five meters away from Bai Yunfei, Su Dong reached out to grab at him. As he reached for him, Su Dong cried out in a hurry, "Young master!

Stop! That person is....”

“Bang!”

What happened next had been something that completely unexpected to everyone! In the moment Su Dong’s hand touched Liu Shun, the drunkard had whirled around with his right arm bulging outwards to slam his fist right into Su Dong’s face as if he had been planning to do so!

Su Dong had been shocked by Bai Yunfei’s appearance, but he had not thought that Liu Shun would punch at him! Caught off guard, the man had been struck backwards a little over ten meters and rendered him dazed for the time being.

“F*ck! I just knew you were going to ruin my plans! Hah, were you trying to pull a fast one on me? You’re kidding!” Liu Shun had crowed in satisfaction as he brought back his fist.

“.....”

Bai Yunfei was speechless. In his mind, he had thought, “Just how badly does this guy hate his bodyguard? Even drunk, he was on guard against these ‘sneak attacks’! Sounds like his bodyguard was always trying to ‘ruin’ his ‘fun’.” It had been a good assumption to make that since Su Dong was far stronger than Liu Shun, he would not injured by any sneak attack by Liu Shun. But because of the fear that Liu Shun would anger Bai Yunfei, he had been mainly focused on him and had been struck by Liu Shun as a result.

Giving two mad barks of laughter, Liu Shun’s eyes returned back to Bai Yunfei. Kicking off the ground, he flew towards Bai Yunfei with a loud shout, “I’m a man that means what I say! Take off your clothes now!”

“.....”, Bai Yunfei wasn’t speechless this time, but eerily disturbed. This kid was truly a raving lunatic. Didn’t he know that other people would misunderstand the meaning behind his words?

Sighing, Bai Yunfei thought, “Since your attendants and your bodyguard won’t protect you, then I’ll do it in their place to pacify you.”

When Liu Shun extended his right hand out to grab his shirt after landing in front of him, Bai Yunfei raised his right hand without any change in expression. A red light flashed, and something seemed to have appeared in his hands. However, no one was able to clearly see it, due to its extremely quick speed. Then, the object in his hand instantly smacked Liu Shun’s skull.

“Bang!”

A muffled sound echoed out. Liu Shun hadn’t even fully landed, while his right hand was only an inch away from Bai Yunfei’s shirt. However, he was sent flying towards the anxious Su Dong in the next instant, and was frantically caught by the latter.

This was the brick’s +13 effect, Hurling!

The brick instantly disappeared with a flash of his right hand. Su Dong was simply unable to see what he had taken out, and didn’t even feel any fluctuations in his soulforce.

Su Dong didn’t even have the time to be stunned by Bai Yunfei’s casual attack. He hastily lowered his head to look at Liu Shun, who was caught by him. Yet, he noticed Liu Shun had already passed out, and that the left side of his forehead was swelling. However, there were no more bruises on Liu Shun’s body except for that. He didn’t find any problems either when he used his soulforce.

After letting out a long sigh, he noticed that the back of his shirt was already drenched with cold sweat. He looked up and saw that Bai Yunfei was standing in his original location. There had been a smile on Bai Yunfei’s face, but it did not quite reach his eyes.

“Don’t worry, he’s just knocked out. He’ll be fine after a rest. In the future, make sure to look after him so that he doesn’t cause trouble with the wrong people.” Bai Yunfei nodded his head to

him. Then, without a second glance at Su Dong, he turned away,

Su Dong had been left in a state of shock. He hadn't thought that Bai Yunfei would let off his young charge that easily. But either way, this had been what he wanted. Turning back to look at the stunned attendants, he barked, "What are you looking at! Hurry up and escort the young master back home!"

Once more, Bai Yunfei blended in with the crowd of pedestrians walking to and from. From there, he began to slowly ask people for directions back to the Ye.

Slowly bringing up his right hand to his eyes, he clenched it tightly. "This will work...it's a little awkward, but as long as I continue to develop it, it'll become a surprise killing technique! Threefold Slap! Hehehe...."

Earlier, he had casually took out the brick he hadn't used for a long time. However, the 'Threefold Slap' that Li Chengfeng joked about suddenly appeared in his mind. When Li Chengfeng had talked about it at first, he didn't take it seriously. He jokingly tested it out for a few times, but had failed. Thus, he threw it to the back of his mind. After all, the uses of the brick and the Firetipped Spear were completely different.

He didn't think that he would be able to barely use this technique after attaining his current strength. This was actually something that was a great surprise to him.

After three consecutive slaps, he would be able to trigger the brick's +13 effect, as long as nothing unexpected occurred. The probability of the confusion effect and stun effect were also greatly increased. In the future, it seemed like he would have another technique that could catch his opponents off guard.

Nothing unexpected had happened to Bai Yunfei this time around and had managed to make it back to the Ye after half an hour. Tianming and Jing Mingfeng had returned a long time ago and were currently playing around with something that looked like a

cross between a rabbit and a cat. Its fluffy tail was bigger than its body and had the bark of a dog. It wasn't a soulbeast, but something unique.

After a few questions, he found out this was something the two had bought in the so-called 'Unique Beast Garden', due to Tianming finding it 'very cute'.

Bai Yunfei was rendered speechless. He could easily see how 'cute' this fellow was... "Right, Tianming. Tomorrow, can you take me to the house of Liu in the afternoon? Since I've come, I should go visit them for a bit..."

Chapter 142: Paying a Visit to the House of Liu

"Hey, brother Bai, why are you going to the Liu for?" Tianming asked in confusion. But then a thought struck him, "Oh, I know! You've said before that you had a friend with the Lius. Yea, no problem then....I'll bring you there tomorrow afternoon."

Tianming had a simple mind and did not bother to ask anymore about it. Only Jing Mingfeng who was by his side had given Bai Yunfei a deep stare. He didn't say much to him and instead began to talk about the 'Duke of Drink' with Tianming and what he had done in the past....there seen to have been a special interest from his end. Bai Yunfei had felt that Jing Mingfeng was treating Tianming like....family almost. Whatever reason there was for it, Bai Yunfei wasn't willing to ask or be suspicious about. Everyone had their reasons, and he had no business with them about it.

He hadn't talked about what had happened to him before his return and had thought that when he went to the house of Liu tomorrow, a single explanation would be all that was needed to clear up the misunderstanding.

Later that night in his own room.

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Middle Rare

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 337

Additional Attack: 155

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is an 8% chance for the attack to grow by 100 attack.

Upgrade Requirement: 70 Soulpoints

In Bai Yunfei's hand was the blade he had taken from Zhao Chuan. Taking a look at it for several moments, he then stored it away back into his space ring. He had no desire or plan to use this item and had only wanted to see if there would be any additional effects once it hit +10. But with such a common effect, he had been nonplussed and prepared another batch of equipment to upgrade....Even the Heart Protecting Mirror that had two holes in it had an even more ordinary additional effect at +10. It was useless now, but maybe he'd take it out again in the future.

It was only when Bai Yunfei had fully upgraded all of the equipment in his space ring and ran out of soulforce that he fell back onto his bed and fell asleep.

The next day at noon in a mansion to the west of Gaoyi City.

A middle-aged man was currently furiously rebuking a young man whose head was hung down in submission. This youngster had looked as if he had been asleep if anything, and on the left part of his head was a giant bump—it was Liu Shun. The drunkard that had been slapped asleep for an entire night by Bai Yunfei.

While listening to his father with drooping eyes, Liu Shun's left hand itched to grab at the space ring in his right hand. Even now, he was sorely tempted to start indulging himself in the fine wine he had stored in it.

“Utterly disgraceful! Are you even listening to me!” The head of the house of Liu, Liu Kun, slammed an angry fist onto the tea table next to him. The cup that had been on it had been overturned as a result, causing the tea and the tea leaves inside to spill over.

“Yes! Yes! Your child has been listening!” Liu Shun spoke up with great hurry.

“Then tell me. What was I just saying?”

“You—you were saying that....”

“Pah! You unfilial child, when will you ever let me live a life free

of worry!” Liu Kun glared at his failure of a drunken son and spoke, “Your oldest brother has made some success for himself at the Wood School, and your second brother has done well with the family business even despite his lack of talent in cultivation! But you! What do you do? You spend the entire day drinking wine! Do you think drinking such gluttonous amounts of wine like that will make you similar to the capital’s ‘Wine Lord’, Chen Qiantan? Let me tell you, you and him are nothing alike! He enjoys drinking, but he never becomes too drunk! And you? You spend the entire day as if being drunk is the only thing you know how to do! You bear dishonor to the family!”

When his father spoke, even Liu Shun had felt rather ashamed at his actions. Ever since he accompanied his father to the capital and saw the sixteen year old ‘Chen Qiantan’ ten years ago, Liu Shun had completely worshipped the man and his awe-inspiring name of ‘Wine Lord’. From that moment on, he had tried to imitate him and earned the title of ‘Duke of Drink’. But instead of being a noble person like Chen Qiantan, he was a drunkard of terrible renown.

“If you spent your days as a complete drunk without causing trouble, I would turn a blind eye. But yesterday, you’ve managed to earn the ire of a Soul Sprite! If not for his kindness, you’d be a cripple if not dead!”

Liu Shun had looked away guiltily. “I don’t even know what I was doing when I was drunk, how should I know how strong the people I’m fighting are? But how unlucky I was to be knocked unconscious for an entire night?”

It was only then that Liu Shun realized the giant bump on his head. Hurriedly moving to use some soulforce to massage it, the bump quickly receded back into normal levels.

At that moment, the sounds of frantic footsteps could be heard. The owner had been Su Dong, the bodyguard of Liu Shun. From his appearance, he looked rather frantic.

“My lord, the second son of the house of Ye, Ye Tianming, has brought a friend to visit us!

“Eh? The second son....what does he want? Is he going to ask us for help with the conflict between the Ye and the Zhao? But that’s not something a kid who only knows how to play would be a messenger for. But who’s the other person he’s bringing?” Liu Kun asked. Noticing the oddity of Su Dong, Liu Kun asked, “What, did you have something to say?”

“My lord, the one that the son of the Ye has brought is the expert from yesterday....”

“What?” Liu Kun had been aghast. “Are you sure it’s him?”

“There’s no mistaking it. I saw him myself; he even waved hello to me....I didn’t wish to delay this report and had the caretaker bring him inside while I ran here.”

Liu Kun’s eyebrows knitted together in worry, “I hadn’t thought that he’d come to meet us. Is he going to denounce us? No, that can’t be it, otherwise he wouldn’t have let Shun’er off that easily. Is this coincidence then? If Ye Tianming is bringing him, then what’s going on? Is he the hired help perhaps?”

He had been silent for a while before Liu Kun spoke up once more, “Prepare the finest tea and snacks. We shall greet the guests as best as we can!”

Turning his head to Liu Shun who was still kneeling on the ground, he barked out. “Stand up! Hurry up and clean yourself up! Then you’ll come back here and apologize! If he isn’t willing to forgive you, then I’ll break one of your legs!”

“I....”

“Shut your mouth and get going!”

A while later, Bai Yunfei and Tianming had been followed the caretaker into the large receiving halls. As soon as they crossed over the doors, the head of the Lius had came to greet them with

an amicable smile.

“Haha, young lord Ye, your uncle Liu wasn’t expecting a visit from you! How is brother Ting doing? Not about to breakthrough to the Soul Ancestor realm I hope?” Liu Kun pulled at Tianming’s hand in a friendly greeting.

Tianming had been at a loss on why this sudden treatment. He very rarely saw the head of the Lius, and never was the man so polite as he was now.

But having received such a friendly greeting from the man who was on equal levels with his own father, Tianming had been rather humbled by it. “Hello uncle Liu, my father is doing fine, but having a breakthrough to the next realm is still a distance away. He talks about the eldest son of the Lius quite often, saying that his potential is unlimited if he was able to make it into the Wood School.”

“Haha, Ping’er has good luck on his side, that’s all. It only just so happens that my family has some connections with the Wood School too. It was best to make use of those connections really. Your father was the exceptional one; he made his entire fortune on his business alone....” Liu Kun had waved off Ye Tianming’s words with modesty as well before turning his eye to Bai Yunfei. Smiling still, he asked, “And you are...?”

Bai Yunfei cupped his fists together in greeting, “I am Bai Yunfei, my salutations, lord Liu.”

Chapter 143: I'll be Imposing on You Then

“Mid-stage Soul Sprite!”

As a late-stage Soul Sprite, Liu Kun couldn't treat Bai Yunfei lightly anymore and was shocked beyond belief.

“He's only twenty years old at the very oldest! If he's able to become a mid-stage Soul Sprite at such a young age, he's undoubtedly an extremely talented person if not exceptional! But which family is he the son of? His surname is Bai but I've never heard of such a family before. So then which school is he a part of? How did the Ye gain such a friend, did they find a new powerful patron?”

As the gears in his head continued to spin, Liu Kun had been careful enough to not show the conflicting thoughts of his on his face. “Lord Bai, there's no need to be so polite. Please come in and let us talk.”

As everyone sat down and had their tea cups placed in front of them, Liu Kun started off the conversation with some small talk with Tianming. “Ah, nephew Tianming,” He smiled, “What brings you here today, are you looking for Shun'er?”

“Oh, you're mistaken, uncle Liu. Brother Bai was the one that wanted to pay a visit actually. I was only leading the way for him.” Tianming pointed towards Bai Yunfei to explain himself.

“Ah? Is that so?” Liu Kun spoke with perplexity. He hadn't thought that it was Bai Yunfei that sought them out. “Lord Bai, what reason have you for seeking my family today?”

Smiling, Bai Yunfei spoke, “Lord Liu, please don't think too much about it. I was only passing along the way and wanted to pay a visit. Once you read this letter, you'll understand the reason.”

Handing over the latter You Qingfeng had given him in Jade Willow City, Bai Yunfei allowed Su Dong to hurry forward and

take the letter to Liu Kun to read.

Still confused, Liu Kun opened the letter and began to read.

It had only taken a single glance at the letter for the expression on Liu Kun's face to harden with stupefaction. In the next moment, his expression grew serious, and even his posture had straightened up into an even more formal one by a small fraction.

The more he read, the more Liu Kun couldn't help but feel his heartbeat accelerate. Under Bai Yunfei's calm expression and Tianming's curious one, Liu Kun finished reading the letter and then inspected it to verify the authenticity of it.

In the end, Liu Kun sealed the letter back up and looked up at Bai Yunfei with yet another smile like before. The only difference in this smile was that there seemed to have another emotion in it. Tianming had doubted his eyes almost—it looked as if lord Liu, the lord of one of the three major houses of Gaoyi City—was looking at Bai Yunfei with arespectful look?

"It had not occurred to me that lord Bai was acquainted with the young master You. I hope that lord Bai will forgive my tardiness then. If I had known earlier, then I would have sent out an envoy to receive lord Bai into my home." Liu Kun cupped his hands towards Bai Yunfei apologetically.

"Lord Liu, your words are far too serious. I only came to know senior You in Jade Willow City for some time. I was fortunate enough to be in his care during my stay, but he gave me a letter to hand over the house of Liu for when I went to Gaoyi City. Since I am here, I decided that a visit was in order, nothing more."

"Haha, you are far too kind, lord Bai! Please don't see yourself as an outsider. If there is something you need, ten as long as it is within my power, my family will not refuse your wishes!"

"Then, I will accept your kindness in advance. I'll be staying in Gaoyi City for the next few days. If there is something I need, I'll

visit again.”

“Very well! But lord Bai, please don’t ever be afraid to speak up! If the young master You were to find out, he may very well blame me for neglecting lord Bai’s wishes!”

“....” Tianming hadn’t known what to think or say at this sight. It had been slightly funny to him to see that Liu Kun looked like he was desperately begging to help Bai Yunfei in whatever he needed. Although he didn’t know the reason why, Tianming was able to make the connection between the earlier letter and this mysterious ‘young master You’. This Bai Yunfei was truly a powerful figure to him even more so now if even the letter from someone he knew was enough to cow the high and mighty lord Liu.

The following talks had been very friendly, and Liu Kun had adjusted his mannerisms so that he didn’t sound too much like a bootlicker. He had been very amiable and friendly to even Tianming so that he didn’t feel left out of the conversation.

It had been an hour before Bai Yunfei thought that enough was enough. Just as they were about to leave, the sounds of footsteps could suddenly be heard. Just then....Liu Shun entered the room. He had exchanged his robes for a cleaner pair, and his hair was neatly combed behind his head. All in all, he looked extremely elegant rather than the drunken mess that he was yesterday, like a true young lord.

“Father, I have arrived.” Liu Shun spoke courteously to Liu Kun. And then to Tianming, he spoke, “Hey, Tianming, I heard you ran away from homes for a couple of months. How was it, was it fun?”

Tianming was clearly more familiar with Liu Shun and had smiled in response, “Hey there, brother Liu! It’s been a long time. It was pretty fun outside, and I learned lots!”

Nodding his head, Liu Shun turned to look at Bai Yunfei. When he saw just how young he was, Liu shun couldn’t help but speak to Su Dong behind Liu Kun, “That can’t be right? Su Dong, you sure

this guy's the one who knocked me unconscious? Is he really a Soul Sprite? I don't think so....”

“Shun'er, you're being rude!” Liu Kun barked.

“Brother Liu, what do you mean knocked unconscious? You met big brother Bai?” Tianming asked.

“I er....” With his father's rebuke and Tianming's questioning, Liu Shun looked to Bai Yunfei, unsure of how to respond.

Before Liu Kun could even formulate a response, Bai Yunfei had already nodded his head to him. “Hehe, young master Liu, we meet again. If you don't remember, we met yesterday when you were drunk. If I offended you, then please forgive me.”

“Oh....” Liu Kun hadn't been expecting such a response from Bai Yunfei and spoke up urgently, “Lord Bai, you are far too kind. From what I heard from Su Dong, my drunken dog-of-a-son annoyed you. Please, lord Bai, please forgive my son about that.”

Then glaring balefully at Liu Shun, he spoke, “Lord Bai is a chivalrous person, do you think he's the same as you, you wastrel? Hurry up and apologize to lord Bai!”

Because he wasn't drunk, Liu Shun had realized just how peculiar his father was acting and was taken aback from it. Although he didn't understand what was happening, he didn't dare retort back to his father and cupped his hands in apology to Bai Yunfei with reluctance. “This one was far too drunk yesterday and offended lord Bai. I beg for your forgiveness and am in your debt. If not for lord Bai's grace, I would have made a clown of myself. In order to convey my apologies and goodwill, I would like to arrange for a feast this afternoon.”

“.....”

Hearing such an inappropriate ‘apology’ Liu Kun's eyebrows furrowed together. Just as he was about to speak up to rebuke him again, Bai Yunfei waved his hands light-heartedly. “Hehe, you are

far too kind, master Liu. There's no need to go through such trouble.”

“Of course I must! This is how I need to express my sincerity. You would do me the honors and placate my guilt in accepting.” Liu Shun nodded his head ‘vigorously’. Inwardly, he thought, “If you decline again, then I’ll just say that’s that then. But if you accept, then I’ll ‘try’ my best. Father shouldn’t be angry about that, would he?”

But then just several seconds later, Bai Yunfei nodded his head. “If master Liu is inviting me so passionately, I’ll be imposing onto you then....”

Chapter 144: The Goal

Almost as if Liu Shun thought he had heard wrong, he asked once again for clarification, “What did you say?”

“It is hard to refuse such hospitality, so if young master Liu is so passionate in inviting me, then I won’t be refusing it. Without discord, there is no concord. You are Tianming’s friend as well, so if we all eat together, we will be able to become closer friends faster.”

Bai Yunfei’s attitude had made a complete change, making him seem extremely willing to eat a meal with him.

“I....” Liu Shun was about to choke on his own words in a fit of depression. To himself, he thought, “I want nothing to do with you. You said you’d only be here for a few days before leaving, so what’s the point of making friends now?”

But he had already invited him before, and now Bai Yunfei had accepted. He couldn’t exactly say, “Actually, I don’t want to invite you.” either. Right now, Liu Shun wanted to slap himself hard in the face twice. But instead, he managed to force out a smile, “Yes, very well then. Thank you lord Bai for doing me this honor. Today afternoon we’ll....”

“I’ve heard that there is an especially grand restaurant in Gaoyi City?” Just before Liu Shun could offer a restaurant, Bai Yunfei had interjected first.

“Eh? Are you talking about ‘Aroma Delicacy’?”

“Yes, I believe that was the name of it. Why not eat there?”

“Oh....well, very well. That will be no problem. I’ll have the finest foods and drink prepared for lord Bai then....” Liu Shun had been skeptical. Aroma Delicacy was indeed the finest restaurant in Gaoyi City and was also a restaurant where the finest foods were had, but that meant the price of it was very expensive as well. Did

Bai Yunfei want to make the best out of the situation? Liu Shun didn't exactly know the answer to that, but the restaurant didn't really matter to him. He just wanted to deal with this current headache in a way that he would escape the reprimands of his father.

"Ah, I've a friend that came with me to Gaoyi City to sightsee. I hope young master Liu won't mind if I bring him along?"

"Of course, lord Bai's friend is also an honored guest of mine. He should be treated to this meal as well."

"Tianming was troubled today to bring me here, would he be allowed to come as well?"

"Ye Tianming was never a problem to worry about, I'll be sure to let everyone eat their fill!" Liu Shun spoke, but inside his mind, he was ranting, "How annoying can you get! How many people do you plan to bring with you to eat?"

"Haha, then I thank young master Liu for your hospitality. I'll be returning first to find my friend. We'll meet again at Aroma Delicacy then."

Bai Yunfei had looked quite pleased as he rose up to speak to Liu Kun, "Lord Liu, then I'll be taking my leave. If lord Liu happens to see senior You in the future, please forward my thanks to him."

"Oh...yes yes! Take care then, lord Bai! If there is ever help that you need, you only need to ask!"

.....

After Tianming and Bai Yunfei left, Liu Shun had finally let out a sigh in relief. But when he turned around to see the strange expression on his face, he couldn't help but ask, "Father, what's wrong? I've already invited them as guests to eat this lunch, was that the wrong thing to do?"

"No, no. You did well. This Bai Yunfei is someone we cannot afford to make enemies with. Don't let him be displeased with you."

If lord You were to learn about this, then your older brother may experience difficulties.” Liu Kun shook his head with a grave expression.

“Lord You? That lord You! Ah! Don’t tell me....”

“Correct. It is the very same You Qingfeng that helped your older brother enter the Wood School. The head apprentice of the elder and a genius at his craft. You Qingfeng has even the chance to become the next elder of the Wood School.”

“Then this Bai fellow is....”

“Yes, lord You wrote a letter saying that should Bai Yunfei ever require anything, we are to offer up assistance to the best of our ability. From the letter, lord You holds Bai Yunfei in very high regards. But that isn’t strange, this youth is an extremely talented figure as well and is without a doubt someone that would easily gain lord You’s eye. We should do our best to do as lord You instructed, but....ai! What he’s asking for is a bit hard to do! Should our household even help him or not....”

“Father, what are you saying? What was his request? I didn’t see him say anything....” Liu Shun asked in confusion.

“He didn’t ask for anything, but his intentions are very clear to see!”

“Intensions? What intentions?”

“.....” Liu Kun stared at Liu Shun in confusion for a moment before shaking his head, “He is currently living with the Ye, and today he had Ye Tianming bring him here. This is clearly telling us that he has a good relationship with the house of Ye. With how the situation is between the Ye and the Zhao, the Zhao has the support of the Beast Taming School. If nothing out of the ordinary happens, then the Ye will have to ultimately surrender to the Zhao. But with the arrival of this person, he changes everything! Although he’s a mid-stage Soul Sprite, he cannot hope to

intimidate the Zhao. But as someone that managed to earn the eye of lord You, I cannot see him as any regular Soul Sprite then....”

Pausing for a brief moment, Liu Kun then continued, “Furthermore, he mentioned the Aroma Delicacy. That too has a deeper meaning to it.”

“Doesn’t he just want to eat a meal? What deeper meaning is there?”

“You....idiot! Don’t tell me you forgot who owns the Aroma Delicacy! It’s the second son of the Zhao! The Zhao owns the Aroma Delicacy! If the third son of the Liu and the second son of the Ye were to eat a banquet at an establishment that is owned by the Zhao, what would the Zhao think?!”

“That Bai Yunfei. He’s silently helping out the Ye while borrowing the power of the Liu to confuse the Zhao. At the same time, he’s probing our reaction and attitude towards this....”

Liu Shun’s eyes grew wide at that, “Were there so many goals in a single meal? This Bai person is using us then? How arrogant! Why should we help him?! We might as well cancel the feast then!”

“We should respond, but how could we go back on our words?! The boy hadn’t asked for anything, but then it was you that requested a banquet to be had to repay him! It was you that invited him to eat a meal! While it might do nothing to affect our relationship with Bai Yunfei, but to the Zhao, they’ll see it as us trying to improve relationships with Bai Yunfei. With all that’s done, the best that we can do is to keep calm and observe the situation.”

“Remember now, if during the meal....”

.....

On the other side, Tianming had begun to inquire to Bai Yunfei about just how he had knocked Liu Shun unconscious. Bai Yunfei had hid nothing from him and simply told him what had happened

yesterday, causing Tianming's eyes to widen wide open. "Goddamn! Brother Liu was that bold?! Haha, how unlucky he was to come across brother Bai! If he was knocked out, that's his fault then. But still....I wanted to see him take out his penis to take a piss right in front of everyone....haha!"

After traveling with Jing Mingfeng for a long enough time, even his catchphrases had managed to infect Tianming.

"But....brother Bai, I know that you aren't the type to hold a grudge over this, so what was the point of accepting that meal? And the Aroma Delicacy is the territory of that fatass Zhao Liang, if something were to happen while the Ye and the Zhao are in such a delicate situation...."

"We're just eating a meal and to allow our differences with the Liu to be resolved. Don't worry, if that fatass really doesn't know any better and tries to make trouble with us, we'll teach him a lesson." Bai Yunfei spoke carelessly.

"Oh...." Tianming nodded his head as if he understood and said nothing more.

When Jing Mingfeng had heard about the afternoon meal, he had been very excited. From his expression, he had looked as if he was waiting for something great to happen. This had caused Tianming to be skeptical--Was a free meal like this really something to be that excited about?

Chapter 145: Use This to Slap Him

Later that afternoon, Tianming led Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng towards the center of the city where the Aroma Delicacy was.

In the most luxurious room in the three-stories Aroma Delicacy, a veritable mountain of exotic delicacies were piled up on top of one another on the table. Four people were seated around the table as two young women stood off to the side with a pitcher in hand. Su Dong was standing quietly in the corner to the left as he watched the young charge of his ‘push his cup for a drink and return with a bowl’ with a very helpless expression.

“And the eighth cup! As lord Bai said, there cannot be concord without discord! It bears me great honor to be able to meet such a chivalrous person like lord Bai! Yes, in light of our recent meeting, let me toast you all one more time! Drink up as you will!”

“.....”

The corners to Bai Yunfei’s mouth twitched slightly as he gave Jing Mingfeng and Tianming a wry smile before drinking a cup.

“And the ninth cup! It too, is a great honor to meet lord Jing! Let me toast you all again! Drink up as you will!”

“.....”

Bai Yunfei didn’t know what to say by this point. The very moment this person had sat down, he polished off five drinks in ‘punishment’ for yesterday’s crime. Originally thinking that this was just how it was done, Bai Yunfei paid no more attention to it and didn’t bother to mention that there wasn’t a need to repeat such a thing or to toast in meeting Jing Mingfeng.

But by the time Liu Shun had drained his tenth cup, Bai Yunfei realized—this person was just finding an excuse to drink! Before the meal could even begin, he had already drained half the jar. But seeing how he was drinking in consideration to the guests, it was

clear to see that he was ‘restraining’ his drinking.....

“Young master Liu, I’ve heard that the crystal fish of Aroma Delicacy is a delectable dish. Why don’t we eat first? In truth, I’ve been wanting to eat here ever since I’ve arrived in Gaoyi City.”

Just as Liu Shun was about to drink his thirteenth cup, Bai Yunfei interjected in before he could have any more wine poured in. Giving a stare at the two others, Jing Mingfeng and Tianming rose their chopsticks up to speak up as well, “Yea yea! Let’s eat! I skipped breakfast so I’m starving!”

“Uhhh....” Liu Shun stared blankly, but then he put down the wine cup with a slightly resentful expression. But then when he realized just how over-the-top he had been, he raised his chopsticks up as well. “Yes, then let us eat first. All of these foods are specialties of Aroma Delicacy; each one of them are extremely delicious. Despite his character, fatty Zhao has a palate that is far better than anyone else.”

When Liu Shun wasn’t drunk, his words and demeanor were fitting his status. His speech was concise and he wasn’t cold to any single person in conversation, making the table talks quite pleasant. But every so often, he would try to find a reason to drink another cup, causing Bai Yunfei to feel both helpless and afraid that he would become a raving drunk again.

Half an hour later, Liu Shun had finished off three jars of wine all by himself. But his expression was calm and his eyes were clear, indicating that he was clearly a drinker of high tolerance.

Tianming and Liu Shun were good friends with one another and had began to talk about the ‘great fun’ Tianming had during his ‘excursion’ to the outside world. Jing Mingfeng was rather absent minded during the meal; every so often, he would glance to the doors of the room as if he was waiting for something....

And Bai Yunfei was looking only to the dishes on the plate. Every so often, he would say something, but it was clear to see that he

came here to just enjoy a nice meal.

Just as the meal came to a close, the sounds of footsteps could be heard approaching the door. Followed by the laughter of some sort of duck, the doors to the room was pushed open to allow for a meatball to move in.

Oh. No, it was a person actually. This person was shy two meters tall and had a waist that was nearly the same length as he was tall. The neck of this person was nowhere to be seen on this perfectly spherical body. But the funniest thing about this person was how his combed hair looked like a big bottle gourd with four small limbs. Even Bai Yunfei had nearly spat out his food at the sight of this person.

“Haha! I only just heard of young master Liu and little brother Tianming welcoming my humble abode a few moments ago! Your presence brings light to this humble dwelling! But how unkind you are to not give Zhao Liang a message beforehand! I would have prepared a better welcoming for you two!”

This fatty gourd....no...this Zhao Liang was the one that was speaking with rough quacking sounds of a duck.

Bai Yunfei, Liu Shun, and Su Dong who was in the corner had raised an eyebrow at his entrance. And even Tianming was slightly taken aback. But the most unexpected reaction was the one of Jing Mingfeng.

“F*cking hell! You finally came out! After all of this waiting, I thought the flowers would wilt before you would come out! Hurry up and get to the fighting already then!” Jing Mingfeng spoke out loud in joy as if a great play was about to start right in front of him. In his joy, he had slapped the table with a firm hand.

“.....”

Zhao Liang came to a screeching halt as he turned his head several degrees to stare at Jing Mingfeng in what appeared to be

astonishment with his small beady eyes.

Bai Yunfei didn't even know just how to react to Jing Mingfeng. "There wasn't a point to being so anxious for this! He only just came out and you're shouting about fighting already...." He thought to himself.

"Haha, my friend here drank a little too much. Please forgive him, young master Zhao. Pretend he didn't say a word." Bai Yunfei turned to speak to Zhao Liang apologetically. In his mind, he was looking at what the rumors said to be the 'fatass'. As expected from his expectations, this was a fatty of stupendous levels.

"Haha, fatty Zhao, brother Jing really did drink too much. He was only joking around with you, don't take offense to it please." Liu Shun copied Bai Yunfei's reaction and hurried to help.

"Oh yea! I'm drunk! I was just speaking the lines to an opera I've heard. Don't mind me, don't mind me at all...." Jing Mingfeng himself knew that he had slipped up in his excitement. Mimicking the belch of a drunken man, he fell onto the table and moved no more.

"....."

In the midst of the silence, Zhao Liang's face seemed to have begun to twitch as if he was trying hard to quash the anger in him. Smiling, he spoke, "Haha, this friend is quite interesting! Little brother Tianming, is this your friend?"

"Hmph, don't call me that as if you were my family. Since when was I your brother?" Tianming scowled in discontent.

"Haha, it'll be good to call ourselves that. When I marry Ye Yan, you'll have to call me brother-in-law! It'd do you well to get accustomed to that." Zhao Liang laughed merrily.

"You....you fatass! You're as fat as a pig and yet you want to marry my cousin? Don't get carried away!"

An ominous glint flashed across his eyes as Zhao Liang smiled

insincerely, “She should be lucky that I took a liking to her! For now, she’ll be my concubine, but when the Ye swears allegiance to the house of Zhao, I’ll work her like a servant!”

“You....you shameless hog swine! Your tongue doesn’t like to hide I see, dreaming of swallowing even my Ye family, you’re dreaming!”

“You only just came back from your excursion, so maybe you don’t understand how Gaoyi City is like now? What fight can the Ye give us? You’re in the final struggle. No matter how hard you try, it’ll only delay the inevitable.”

“Bullshit! Wait until my father becomes a Soul Ancestor, he’ll show the Zhao what-to!”

“Soul Ancestor? You sure he’s not going to die before that?”

“You....”

Because of his simple mind, Tianming had been brought to a boiling point with just a few words by Zhao Liang. While he was barking red from the squabble, Zhao Liang had a sinister look on his own face as he struck at the Ye. Their squabbles had gotten so heated that they practically forgot about Liu Shun and Bai Yunfei.

Two bodyguards came up in front of Zhao Liang with malevolent eyes that seemed ready for a fight.

“Tianming, that’s enough. There’s no need to squabble.” Bai Yunfei spoke up in uninterest to stop this pointless bickering. With a shake of his right hand, he dropped an object into Tianming’s hand.

“Use this to slap him....”

Chapter 146: Sending Everyone Flying With a Slap

Bai Yunfei dropped an item onto Tianming's hands, "Use this to slap him...."

"Uhh....." Tianming looked as if he was doubting his eyes as he stared in mute shock at the item in his hands.

"F*cking hell! It's that!" Jing Mingfeng's voice had startled Tianming, causing him to nearly drop the item onto the ground.

What else could be in his hand but the one-and-only red wall brick!

Tianming looked at the brick first and then to Zhao Liang before then back to Bai Yunfei. "Use this...." He started, "To slap him?"

"Yes. Don't you think he's an ugly one to look at? Just slap his head with it." Bai Yunfei nodded his head.

"Yea! Tianming, don't be afraid! That brick in your hand isn't your ordinary brick. It's...." Jing Mingfeng thought for a moment as he tried his best to describe this 'unordinary' brick.

"It's.....the brick that your brother Bai gave you! Just listen to me. This fatass came out for the express purpose of you using that brick to slap his face!"

With the 'encouragement' of these two, Tianming didn't know what to think. But he had been motivated, and he didn't want to seem like a coward to Bai Yunfei or Jing Mingfeng either. With that resolution, he gave two hefty swings of the brick before giving a 'glare' at Zhao Liang to run at him.

Liu Shun had a slight gleam in his eyes, but what he was thinking about couldn't exactly be pinpointed. He hadn't said a thing either, and Su Dong had only stared pensively from his corner in the room as well.

Zhao Liang had recovered from the sight of this brick by the time of Tianming's charge. Seeing how Tianming was planning to hit him with a simple brick, Zhao Liang's face paled in fury, "Hmph! How utterly mystifying! You dare try to hurt me on my own territory! You don't see the house of Zhao as anyone in your eyes, do you! Young master Liu! Since this is between me and him, don't blame me for ignoring you! Men! Teach him a lesson!"

The two guards by his side immediately moved into action to rush against Tianming.

As a Soul Personage, Tianming knew that these two men were also Soul Personage that could beat him with no problem. Unless the two behind Tianming were to fight, he himself would have to plan this fight out.

Just a few steps before the three would meet, the person on Tianming's right reached out to grab the the brick in Tianming's right hand while the person on the left reached out to grab Tianming on the left shoulder to try and put him in submission.

The corners to Tianming's lips twitched as a gleam entered his eyes. For a brief moment, his body came to a stop before then flickering into motion once again. Down below, his feet had done a series of tricky footwork to smoothly maneuver past the person on his left.

Bai Yunfei raised an eyebrow; Tianming had clearly just used a soul skill. Furthermore, he had seen Jing Mingfeng use this particular one before--ah. Jing Mingfeng had taught Tianming even that.

Despite Tianming not being too accustomed to using that soul skill, his opponents weren't too strong and so their attempts to grab onto him had failed as Tianming slipped past.

With the brick raised up, Tianming gave a resounding slap with it onto the other person's head.

“Pow!”

The man stumbled back two steps with his teeth gritted together. As it would look, he seemed to be in a decent amount of pain.

But before he could even recover from his shock, Tianming was already approaching him with a second blow.

“Bang!”

This time, the outstretched brick had slapped him on the right shoulder. But the effect of this second blow was incomparably different to the first one. All that could be seen was the fact that this person was suddenly sent flying through the paper screen walls and onwards without stopping.

The other person raised his fist up to punch Tianming’s head, but Tianming had been even faster and swung the brick around to hit the man on the waist. This person was even more unfortunate than his partner and had the hurling effect of the brick activated at once. Right as a look of astonishment appeared on his face, he was sent hurling through the room. And what was even more unfortunate was the fact that he had broken through the window and out of the building....

Plenty of people could be heard screaming in shock, and even the people inside the building were staring in dumbfounded shock. Of course, Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng were not.

Jing Mingfeng was instead staring with bright eyes as he thought out loud to himself, “This is it! This is it!”

Even Tianming had been dazed in this short moment of time. But it was then with a happy smile that he turned towards Zhao Liang and rushed at him before the first person he had hit would be able to recover.

Zhao Liang had been startled. His two bodyguards had been sent flying from some sort of mysterious power--something that he was not expecting at all. As if he could see some sort of sinister red

glimmer in the brick in Tianming's hand, Zhao Liang's fear grew bigger and bigger as he took several fearful steps backwards. "Hold-hold on! I was just joking with you, don't be like th-"

Tianming hadn't bothered to slow down enough to let Zhao Liang finish his speech. With a flash, he arrived right in front of him and arced the brick so that it would slam into his horrified face.

"Pow!"

The brick had practically embedded itself half an inch into the fatty's face before he fell back from the blow. Yet, the hurling effect had not been triggered.

"Fi-fird uncer, za-zave me....." The fatty's nose had been smashed in from the brick, and parts of his teeth had dropped out as he tried to speak. What he had really tried to say was "Third uncle, save me."

But it was unclear whether or not this third uncle of his would have been able to hear this cry for help, as there was no movement from beyond the door. And by the time he said that, Tianming had already slapped him on the forehead with the brick again.

He was supposed to keel over, but because of the horizontal slap that had triggered the hurling effect, he had instead been sent flying over to the side and slammed into a wall. But then as if he was a ping pong ball, he rebounded against it and flew towards Tianming as if to squash him--this was the counterattack of the fatty!

Brandishing the brick once more, Tianming slapped the fatty once more. Whether it was because Tianming had excellent luck or that Zhao Liang's luck had run out, but the hurling effect was activated once more, causing Zhao Liang to go flying away like a ping pong ball again. Striking the door, he careened through them and out onto the corridors before a single fist grabbed hold of him in midair and gently placed him down.

A black-robed man wearing martial robes and had a hook nose came walking in. Taking a look at the caved in nose and the badly bruised face of Zhao Liang, his face darkened. This was the man that Zhao Liang had cried out earlier to save him. Zhao Liang's third uncle--Zhao Ye. A soul cultivator at the level of a mid-stage Soul Sprite.

Tianming had been just about to rush forward when he was suddenly pulled back. Turning his head to look, he came to the startling discovery that Bai Yunfei had suddenly appeared right behind him.

Taking the brick from Tianming, Bai Yunfei smiled, "It's my turn then."

"Wha? What do you mean by that...." Tianming was surprised, but when he saw Zhao Ye right behind Zhao Liang, he grew frightened. "Crap! That's Zhao Liang's third uncle! He's a mid-stage Soul Sprite! Brother Bai, we're...."

"Brat! You dare humiliate the scion of my family! You are over the top! I'm going to teach you a lesson!" Zhao Ye's eyes had a furious glare to them as he howled in anger. His entire body lit up with light before his foot came stomping down onto the ground to charge at Tianming.

"Bang!"

His entrance had been quick, but his departure had been even faster.

Zhao Ye hadn't even taken a single step before he found himself flying away at an even faster speed. Smashing against the corridor walls, he landed right beside where he had put Zhao Liang. But he did not move--he had been knocked unconscious!

Bai Yunfei tossed the brick up into the air repeatedly, allowing it to glint red in the light as he turned to look at Tianming, "What were you saying just now?"

“ ”
• • • •

Chapter 147: A Meeting

It was eerily quiet. Every single person in the room could only stare at Bai Yunfei in shock and were unable to comprehend the situation.

The third uncle of the Zhao was a mid-stage Soul Sprite. But not even a minute since he was introduced and barely a sentence after he spoke, he had been utterly mowed down by Bai Yunfei....

The two women who had been pouring the pitchers had lost all resemblance of color in their faces as they shivered with fright in their corners. Liu Shun had been trying to think of the best way to handle this situation before and was now at a loss. His mouth was wide open, his face was despondent, and everything was going beyond of his expectations. Su Dong had only made it two steps beyond from his own corner as he tried to reach Liu Shun's side, but right now, his right foot was still hanging the air in shock. Tianming was staring at the spot where Zhao Ye was—it looked as if his brain had suffered a malfunction and shut down. Jing Mingfeng himself was faring slightly better than the others, but even he could barely control the shock he felt in his mind. He knew that Bai Yunfei was strong and had a good chance of winning, but he hadn't expected this course of events! A single soul cultivator of the same level as him was struck down in a single move!

"Then does this mean the first time we met and he slapped me here and there so many times, he was....holding back?" Jing Mingfeng shook his head helplessly. He knew that he didn't understand Bai Yunfei entirely, but just how many more secrets Bai Yunfei had, Jing Mingfeng himself didn't know.....

Bai Yunfei stored away the brick without a change in stride, but there had been a pleased feeling to him. This was his strength. In the past, he had been faced with people that were far stronger than he was. So he had gained a sense of being a loser. But with the recent battle these days, those battles had confirmed that he was

indeed strong—he had a soul skill that people could only dream of, countless of precious soul armaments , and the utterly mysterious and magical Upgrade Technique!

It could be said that with just his upgrade accessories increasing his stats, his strength was already far beyond any soul cultivator of the same level of him. With the attack power boosted by the upgrades, he could activate effects that people couldn't possibly defend against. As thus, he could easily defeat soul cultivators of the same level as him. Soul Ancestors, he had not fought to the death before, but nothing could be guaranteed yet.

Sweeping his eyes across the gathered crowd, Bai Yunfei was pleased at everyone's reactions and coughed. With a slap of Tianming's shoulder, he spoke, "How was it? This fatass was slapped silly by you, how do you feel now?"

Snapping back to awareness, Tianming looked at the uncle and nephew collapsed in the corridor and then back to Bai Yunfei with swiveling eyes. "Hehe, it felt great! I didn't think that using a brick to slap someone would feel so refreshing...."

As he spoke, he moved his right hand in a similar way to Bai Yunfei when he wielded the brick as if the brick was still in his hand.

"Then let's go then. If their family comes here to stop us, leaving won't be easy then."

He gave a look to Jing Mingfeng briefly before turning to Liu Shun with a smile. "Young master Liu, I'm very sorry about this, but we'll have to end things here. We'll be leaving first, I hope that we can find another day to visit your family."

"Wha? Oh, ok-okay...." Liu Shun nodded his head subconsciously.

It was only after the three of them left that Liu Shun regained his wits. Looking at the scenario, he had no idea what to do—his

father hadn't told him what to do in a situation like this!

"Young master, it would be unwise for us to stay here any longer. If men from the Zhao come or if Zhao Ye wakes up, then it'll spell trouble...." Su Dong moved next to Liu Shun with a warning.

"Oh, yes yes. We'll leave at once then and report to father to make a decision." Light re-entered his eyes as Liu Shun and Su Dong quickly moved to exit the Aroma Delicacy.

On the way back to the Ye, Tianming was happily walking right by Bai Yunfei's side as they talked about the battle they had just had.

"Haha, did you pay attention to how that fatass looked like? His entire face was slapped smooth by me, haha! That was satisfying! So satisfying!" Tianming crowed. "I wished my cousin saw that, this was for her. I'll have to tell her when we get back, she'll be so happy to hear it!"

"Yes yes, you've already said that for the past three streets. We know how much you hate that fatty, so there's no need to repeat it again. Wait until you get home and you can explain it to your cousin as slow as you'd like.

"Hehe. Ah, brother Bai, you really are incredible! That uncle of Zhao Liang was a soul cultivator who specialized in defense thanks to his affinity with earth! But you were able to defeat in a single move even though you were also a mid-stage Soul Sprite....and when you use that brick, you're far cooler than when I use it!"

"Uh..." Bai Yunfei scratched at the back of his head as he tried to think of what to say. "What's so cool about throwing a brick around. That's not how you compliment someone."

"Hehe...." Tianming shrugged his shoulders before turning to Jing Mingfeng. Almost as if he realized that he was kissing up to Bai Yunfei too much, he hurried to pay attention to Jing Mingfeng, "Ah! Brother Jing! When we get back, let me introduce my cousin

to you. Let me tell you, she's awfully pretty....”

Jing Mingfeng didn't know whether to laugh or cry as he scolded Tianming, “Kid, weren't you venting your anger because of the fact your cousin was being betrothed? And now you're trying to sell her off to me....”

“Nooo, of course not! I was only just concerned of her well being in the future! But if you were to marry her instead....

“.....”

The three continued to laugh and joke around as they slowly traveled back to Tianming's house. It was almost as if they had completely forgotten about what they did to the Zhao family.

On the way back, Bai Yunfei had actually seen Tianming secretly take a brick from a broken down wall when he thought no one was looking....

Back at the Liu when Liu Kun had heard about what had happened from Su Dong, he had been breathless. It had been with doubt that he asked, “Bai Yunfei had really just used one move? Are you sure Zhao Ye didn't intentionally give up the fight?”

Su Dong nodded his head, “I'm sure of it. Although I don't know what Zhao Ye was planning, he really was about to use his entire strength right as he appeared. But before he could even use it, he was knocked unconscious by that brick of Bai Yunfei....”

“A brick....” Liu Kun bit his lips, “Could that be a high quality soul armament?”

Thinking for a moment, Su Dong replied, “It shouldn't be. I didn't sense soulforce from it. At the very most, it should be an incomplete soul armament....but what he used to move straight to Zhao Ye was definitely a soul skill! And it's an unbelievably high one too!”

If he's able to defeat a soul cultivator of the same level of him so easily, then just who is this Bai Yunfei....” Liu Kun questioned. “I

first thought he wanted to borrow the power of the Liu and demonstrate us to the Zhao at the Aroma delicacy, but I didn't realize that he'd beat down the uncle and nephew. If that's how it's going to be, then the Liu will have to make our stand sooner or later then....”

A thought occurred to Su Dong for a brief moment, causing him to hesitate for a while before saying, “My lord, the men that the Beast Taming School sent to the Zhao family went out several days ago in two groups. I'm not sure of what their goals are, but not a single one of them returned. And on the same night, Tianming came back home. As things stand....”

“I know that. They all disappeared. Even the caretaker Zhao Chuan is gone as well. All that's left is the Soul Ancestor from the Beast Taming School. I wonder how he'll take this news then....”

“We'll find out by tonight or late tomorrow. Pay attention to the two houses. Whether it's to stand aside or intervene, I want to make my decision with all the facts on the table!”

At that moment in front of the doors to the Zhao residence.

A single tall but handsome man with long hair could be seen. He wore blue robes, and when he raised his youthful head, an aura of power could be seen. On his face was a nostalgic expression.

“Ah....it's been ten years, but it feels as if nothing has changed...”

Chapter 148: Zhao Xiluo

In the halls of the Zhao residence.

There had been a gloomy expression on the face of the head of the Zhao as he sat on his chair. He was clearly in an angered state, and by his side, Li Chen of the Beast Taming School was still stroking at the three-tailed cat of his. But only, his eyebrows were creased together as if he was in heavy thought.

Beneath them, the even more unsightly Zhao Ye sat in a small chair with the sunken Zhao Liang next to them. Rolls of bandages had been wrapped around his face so that only his eyes could be seen. Not a single feature of his face outside of that could be seen, causing him to look even more like a calabash.

In addition, there were also two early-stage Soul Sprites.

This was the combined strength of the house of Zhao. A late-stage Soul Sprite, a mid-stage Soul Sprite, two early-stage Soul Sprites, and previously another mid-stage Soul Sprite that was the caretaker Zhao. But because of his disappearance (Death)--this strength right now was insignificant to Li Chen. But in Gaoyi City where the lord of the city was a Saint Ancestor, this was a fearsome force.

“I had you two go forth to spy on the scene! I wanted you to see just why the Ye brat would suddenly be so close with the Liu that they would have a meal and then find an excuse to teach the brat a lesson! You were meant to make the Ye angry and see what the Liu would do. But instead, you were beaten so badly that they weren’t even touched! Tell me, what is the meaning of this!”

Zhao Xing slammed his fist onto the table as he interrogated Zhao Ye.

Zhao Ye’s face grew flushed with color as he tried to think of something to say. “That person by the Ye brat, he’s an expert...”

“Expert? How strong of an expert?”

“Soul Sprite....mid-stage Soul Sprite....”

“The same as you, so why in the world did you get knocked unconscious as soon as you made your appearance!”

“I....” Zhao Ye was at a loss for words. Struggling to find a way to explain himself, he spoke, “His movements were far too fast. Furthermore, the weapon in his hand was bizarre! I couldn’t even react to his surprise attack and was knocked out because of that....”

“An excuse! Then let me ask you, what weapon was he using?”

“It....it was a br-brick....”

“.....”

“.....”

For a while, the entire hall had been silent. Even Li Chen’s hand had paused mid-stroke while Zhao Xing’s nose had twitched itself into a different direction in anger. “What did you say!”

Bitterly, Zhao Ye spoke, “It’s true. It really was a brick.”

“Was it some sort of high-grade soul armament?”

“It-it might be an incomplete soul armament....”

“Yo-you! You....” Zhao Xing pointed his finger angrily at Zhao Ye. For a good while, he could only say ‘you’ to him in his anger.

“Whatever. He’s merely a brat who gets by by relying on a soul armament and soul skill. He isn’t of the Ye, so there’s no need to pay attention to him.” Li Chen waved his hand so that he could continue to speak. “It’s not as if we can’t use this situation to our own advantage. Since you’re so afraid of the Liu intervening, then you may as well learn from this interaction and condemn the Ye! I’ll go with you and subjugate them. That’ll count as fulfilling our promise to you.

“Bah! In the face of indomitable might, resistance is futile. If the

Ye wish to protect themselves, they'll submit to you! With me acting as the representative of the Beast Taming School, what have you to be worried about?"

"But, attendant Li. Isn't this rushing things a little too quickly...." Zhao Xing spoke in hesitation after thinking about it.

One of Li Chen's eyebrows twitched, "I've more important matters to take care of rather than waste time squabbling around here!"

Li Chen had grown more and more fidgety in the past two days. He simply had no desire to get any more involved in this conflict between two small families. He thought that he would have been done a long while ago and would be able to check up to see just what happened with Wu Sen and the others.

Unable to talk back to him, Zhao Xing replied, "Ye-yes! Attendant Li's work is extremely important. We'll head to the Ye and force them to submit to the house of Zhao then!"

"Yes. Worry not then. The promises I make with you will definitely be fulfilled. The Ye will be subjugated, and we will later send you five fifth-tier soulbeasts. We will then support you until you gain the power to become a Soul Ancestor. But after that, it'll be up to you to subjugate the Ye. In turn, you will submit to the Beast Taming School, we will not treat you badly."

Excitedly, Zhao Xing nodded his head and spoke with a quavering voice, "Ye-yes, my house of Zhao...."

"Who says the house of Zhao will submit to the Beast Taming School? I don't agree to this!"

Just at that moment, a loud bark made itself known in the hall, causing everyone to jump. Li Chen himself had looked up towards the entrance while the cat in his hands had let out a slight shout. Jumping to its feet, the cat stared spitefully at the newcomer with its hair standing on its end.

At his declaration, the owner of the voice came striding into the hall. It was the blue-robed young man with his hands behind his back.

Surveying the area around him, the youth had a nostalgic look on his face. Looking to the already surprised Zhao Xing standing up front, his next words surprised everyone else next.

“Father, I’ve returned.”

“What? You’re....you’re....” Zhao Xing was stunned. Staring at the smiling youth with confusion, he was then hit with a sudden realization. As his body shook, his voice quavered, “You’re, you’re Xiluo!”

The youth had looked rather moved by the happy face of Zhao Xing and nodded his head, “It’s me, father. I’ve return home. Your child was an unruly one. For ten years, father, I’ve let you worry about your unfilial child....”

“As long as you’re home, all is well then....” Zhao Xing was no longer as dignified as a lord of a household should be. He had a lovingly warm expression that was surely a hardly seen one as he regarded his son. “After you left ten years ago, do you know how much your mother was worried about you? Ten years without news, we thought that something happened to you....But everything’s okay, you’re home now. We’re a family once again....”

Still smiling, the young man replied, “I’m back. I won’t let you worry anymore. Furthermore, I’ll let make sure the house of Zhao will make it out of this tiny city and become one of the best houses in the entire Beiyan province!”

“Ha! How bold! Brat, from what I heard just now, you seem to be seeing my Beast Taming School as something insignificant. How brassy! Just who are you!” A sinister voice broke the warm atmosphere between the prodigal son and the father as Li Chen interrupted them.

Stopping his father from saying anything more with a wave of his hand, the youth stared defiantly back at him. “Zhao Xiluo of the Water School!”

As this unpredictable development was going on in the household of the Zhao, something equally unexpected was happening over at the Ye.

In the northern courtyards of the Ye, Bai Yunfei was staring roughly two meters up into the air where the thunderbird was flying. As it crackled with purple lightning, Bai Yunfei had a rather confused look on his face.

“Whats....what’s going on here....”

Chapter 149: Soul Contract

When Bai Yunfei returned to the Ye, he had returned promptly to his room and was prepared to think about the next step in dealing with the Zhao—he was determined to help them overcome this moment of crisis wholeheartedly, but he had to do so without any room for mistake. Otherwise, the Ye would be harmed in the process.

“If I can’t break apart this stalemate, then the Ye will never get over this crisis. Right now the Liu were pulled into this matter, but although they haven’t offered any help so far, the Zhao will still feel quite troubled by this move. My display of strength should be more than enough to cause some sort of intimidation effect, but that’ll only stall for time. If I can have the Liu and the Ye unite and have the Wood School intervene, then this problem is as good as solved. However, there’s a chance that the Zhao will refuse to back down and will try to try and subjugate the Ye as soon as possible. With the Beast Taming School acting as their support, even a Soul Ancestor would be enough to bring the Ye down a notch.

“But even if the Zhao moves to do that, it’ll be within my expectations. If worst comes to worst, I’ll have to use senior You’s influence to ask for help from the Liu. I don’t want to stay in Gaoyi City for too long, so the sooner this is resolved, the better....If a battle is really needed, then I wonder if my strength would be enough to do battle with a Soul Ancestor. With my killing moves the Ninefold Thrust and the Flame Winged Daggers, a Soul Exalt would be able to easily overcome those. But a Soul Sprite should meet their match against me. If I fight against a Soul Ancestor, I’ll need to be able to test their strength to see how well I can do.”

Battling against a beast tamer from the Beast Taming School was essentially battling against a soulbeast itself. A soulbeast without rationale nor fear. One would have to avoid the soulbeast to strike at the tamer. This logic was something that everyone knew as

common sense, but it was not an easy thing to accomplish. The Beast Taming School did not become one of the strongest schools in the world for no reason after all. A true expert beast tamer could protect themselves extraordinarily well with their soulbeast puppets being controlled as easily as they would their arms. Without defeating their soulbeasts first, defeating the tamer would be extremely difficult.

Out of all the strongest beast tamers he had fought, the strongest one had been a late-stage Soul Sprite at the very strongest. He had been able to go through them all like a hot knife through butter with the stat-increasing equipment he had, but if he were to go against a true expert, victory would not be as easy.

“Soulbeasts....I’ve only seen a few of them myself, and the only ‘actual’ soulbeasts were Xiao Tang and Xiao Bai. The rest were all puppets....The Beast Taming School really is a disgusting school. Brother Hong Yin said that the people of that school should just go and die. I don’t really have any actual grudges with them, but those beast tamers I killed before—I don’t feel sorry. I might have been left with no other options, but still....”

“I’ve changed....but since when? Did I change when I was being chased out of the Beiyan province? Or when being chased by the Glacial School? Was it with the destruction of the Blackwood Stronghold? Or was it when uncle Wu died for my sake? Maybe even earlier?” For seemingly no reason, Bai Yunfei had immediately back to half a year before he received the Upgrade technique and became a soul cultivator. It had been that moment that kicked off the most complicated part of his nineteen years of living.

But Bai Yunfei had not regretted a single action that he had done. Compared to the muddleheaded struggle for survival from before, he was truly living in every sense of the word now.

“It doesn’t matter what changed or if I changed. As long as I keep my convictions! Uncle said to have a ‘clear conscience’, and

mother said to ‘live freely’. This is my conviction!”

With his mind in a buzz, Bai Yunfei felt at the broken pendant to help clear away his thoughts and open his eyes in determination.

After another moment of consideration, Bai Yunfei took out the space ring that contained all of the soulbeast puppets he had taken from the beast tamers. Using his soul sense, he began to inspect the soulbeasts inside one by one. “When will I be able to have my own soulbeast partner? When I get enough strength....I have to go to the soulbeast forest!”

“Eh? This is....” When his hand had touched the space ring holding the thunderbird, he had been startled—that was because he was beginning to sense a response of soulforce from within! A soulbeast puppet of a beast tamer would only give off a response when the beast tamer ordered it. But the owner of the thunderbird had died a long time ago, meaning that....

Giving it a detailed look, Bai Yunfei the seemingly sleeping thunderbird was just slightly giving off a weakened pulse of soulforce. With the following of Bai Yunfei’s soulsense, the soulforce of the thunderbird had fluctuated a slight amount as if it was responding to Bai Yunfei.

Running out of his room, Bai Yunfei ran out to the open enclosure of the courtyard and gave the space ring a single shake. With a flash of purple light, the thunderbird appeared right in front of him.

There had been a stronger amount of soulforce than previously sensed. Since he was even closer to it now, Bai Yunfei had actually felt a suffocating pressure—an Early-stage Fifth-class thunderbird was on the same level of an Early-stage Soul Ancestor.

“What’s going on? Eh? Its eyes....” Bai Yunfei stared suspiciously at the thunderbird for a brief moment before coming to the realization that the eyes of the thunderbird were a faint purple color!

Although it was expressionless and had not a single emotion to be felt, the thunderbird looked as if it was in a state of ‘imbecility’.

“But how? The soulbeast of a beast tamer should have crimson eyes and be more like a wooden statue, shouldn’t they?” Bai Yunfei thought with furrowed eyebrows. Still skeptical, he shook his hand twice to bring out the other two soulbeasts—and as he expected—they were both crimson-eyed.

“So what caused this abnormality? Perhaps...” Bai Yunfei tried to remember what made this soulbeast in particular so special. Aside from the fact that it was a higher grade soulbeast, there was also a.... “self-detonation”? Was it because of that time it nearly self-destructed?” Bai Yunfei questioned. Because of the frantic nature of the time, Bai Yunfei could only remember that the energy within the thunderbird at the time had been berserk. Other than that, he hadn’t really paid attention to any other attractive force or soulforce that could cause a change. There hadn’t been anything else he found during his cleaning up of the battlefield, and even up to now, there was nothing.

Circling around the thunderbird several times, Bai Yunfei held his hand out to prod it. From there, he couldn’t sense any reaction of soulforce or any other peculiarities that would peg it as different from the other soulbeast puppets. This had caused Bai Yunfei, who had been expecting that something else would happen to feel rather disappointed.

But just as he was about to call this experiment a failure and pack away the thunderbird, something else had happened—he couldn’t call it back into the space ring!

It had clearly been in the space ring before. But right now, he was unable to recall it. This had caused Bai Yunfei to be astonished. Trying several times more without success, Bai Yunfei look at the ring and the thunderbird blankly.

“Really...what’s going on?”

Thinking for a moment, Bai Yunfei placed both hands onto the body of the thunderbird and probed inside with his soulsense.

Just a few minutes later, the previously quiet courtyard had immediately erupted with two tremendous bursts of soulforce. One had been red, the other had been purple in color as it enveloped both thunderbird and Bai Yunfei in a mixture of color and energy.

The doors to the left of the courtyard blew open as Jing Mingfeng came charging out. Sweeping his eyes around, they quickly landed upon the middle where the scene was taking place, causing him to pause in amazement.

“That’s a...a soul contract!”

Chapter 150: Give Up

When Bai Yunfei had sent his soulforce into the body of the thunderbird, something totally unexpected had happened.

He hadn't even the time to inspect the inner body of the thunderbird before the soulforce had been accepted into the body. It had been a strange effect, and it felt as if the thunderbird had taken to the soulforce as if it were a lost child that had seen a friendly stranger and rushed to get close to them instinctively.

With Bai Yunfei's strength, he was far from a level of strength where he could exchange soulforce like this. But because he was extremely close to the thunderbird and because of the fact that it had been 'allowed' by the bird, this scan had been successful and his soulforce had 'rushed' into it.

In this startling moment, Bai Yunfei's first thought hadn't been to pull out right away in terror. It was because of the fact that he couldn't sense any malice at all. To be even more accurate, he didn't feel any 'emotions' at all. The thunderbird had only allowed his soulforce through it without taking any further action.

Amidst the chaotic purple light, Bai Yunfei could 'see' an irregular shaped purple crystal that was emitting an equally purple light off into the surrounding area as it rotated around itself.

There had been a series of complicated-looking lines and markings around the crystal, and upon closer investigation; they were in fact writing! But this sealscript writing had looked a little 'worn', and some of the markings had faded so much that only half of it remained even. Yet, despite the worn down state of the sealscript, it did not seem to completely impact the structural design of the seal. It was more like the actual seal itself was starting to fade away and resume back to its original state.....

When his soulforce drew closer to the seal, the soulsense of the thunderbird around it had given off its first fluctuation of

emotion; it seemed as if it was growing slightly nervous.

Stunned by this revelation, Bai Yunfei realized that this seal pattern had to correlate with the changes of the thunderbird itself. But it was only a guess and not something he could confirm himself.

He had once heard from Hong Yin before that the beast tamers of the Beast Taming School would inflict a slave seal onto the soulbeasts. This slave seal was mysterious upon mysterious and nothing was really known about it. After the slave seal was inscribed, even the most weakest of soulbeasts would have their conscious and soul possibly erased by the seal. From that moment henceforth, they were completely under the whim of their master. Even the act of eating and drinking required the command of their master in order to be done. With the soulbeast in such a state, even if their own master were to try and probe in with their soulsense, there would be no response. If any single person outside of their master were to forcibly intrude into the soulbeast's soul, then it would lead to the complete collapse of the seal, and from there, self-detonation of the soulbeast would happen.

But there was clearly a stark contrast with what he had been told and with this situation Bai Yunfei had on hand. Not only was the soul of the thunderbird not sealed, it had put up no guard at all for him. Bai Yunfei had been able to enter easily and without any response from the slave seal.

In this moment of pondering, Bai Yunfei could then sense yet another change in the soulsense of the thunderbird. It was clearly urging Bai Yunfei's soulsense towards the slave seal!

Despite his surprise, Bai Yunfei had immediately tried to communicate with his soulsense. But like before, there had been no response. This had to be a natural response from the body of the thunderbird instead.

"What's going on...." Bai Yunfei 'turned' his eyes to look at the

slave seal to think while carefully extending with his soulsense.

“Boom!”

In his mind, Bai Yunfei could feel an explosion go off as soon as the soulsense made contact with the slave seal. A look of disappointment had flashed across his face for a fleeting moment as he snapped to awareness. But to his discovery, his soulforce was flowing into the thunderbird’s body in an unending flow as if there was some sort of magnet that attracted it to the bird. As it flowed into the thunderbird, all of the energy had moved towards the already halted slave seal and directly into the purple crystal.

“Bzzzz....” He didn’t know if it was just his imagination or not, but Bai Yunfei had clearly heard the crystal slowly buzz and hum. Upon closer investigation, he could see a rich amount of soulforce come spilling out from it and encompass his own soulforce to circle around the crystal.

Under Bai Yunfei’s dazed eyes, practically half of his soulforce had been ‘absorbed’ into the thunderbird’s body. It had been like a strand of his soul had been taken from his body and was being urged to go towards the degraded slave seal. To his befuddlement, the already worn down seals were starting to break down even more and more! The crimson coloration from its eyes was fading away, and the seal markings were slowly dissolving into nothing to leave behind an even more simplistic version of the seal. But during the times the crimson coloration of its eyes came back, the seal markings did as well, making it look as if it were new.

At the same time, Bai Yunfei was slowly coming to the realization that when his soulforce went even deeper in the thunderbird, a seal matrix relatively similar to the old one had started to form slowly....

“This is....this is a soul contract!”

Bai Yunfei had came to a swift conclusion--in this current moment, the thunderbird was trying to form a soul contract with

it!

As long as the two consented, then a soul seal would be formed onto their souls. This thunderbird would then become the soulbeast partner of Bai Yunfei, and from then on, they would share harmony and discord with one another!

Bai Yunfei had dreamt of having a soulbeast partner for himself. So with this opportunity prompted right in front of him, wouldn't he be happy to accept it with both hands?

The answer was....no!

Because of Hong Yin's influence, Bai Yunfei saw a soulbeast partner as something extremely important. How could he form a soul contract with a soulbeast he knew nothing about from the Beast Taming School that enslaved it? Although with all things considered as a soul cultivator, this was akin to the saying 'being tossed a bone from the heavens'. But still, this was not what Bai Yunfei wanted.

"Sorry, but the soulbeast partner I want isn't you. This soul contract--I'll have to decline!"

When the thunderbird had happily asked to form a soul contract with Bai Yunfei, he had immediately cut off the flow of soulsense and closed his eyes. Kicking off the ground, he jumped backwards away from the thunderbird. And from there, the red and purple light receded and plit away.

Jing Mingfeng had already charged out from his room by that time and had been privy to the sight of the amalgamation of red and purple soulforces between the two. Straight away, he charged towards Bai Yunfei--Bai Yunfei and that thunderbird were forming a soul contract!

"But...but how! That thunderbird was clearly a soulbeast puppet that the Beast Taming School enslaved! Soulbeast puppets! How in the world did ol'Bai manage to form a soul contract with one!"

What is going on!"

He had been thoroughly shocked, but he couldn't do anything to stop them either. Just as he was frantically thinking of what to do, even more frantic footsteps could be heard rushing into the courtyard--it was Ye Ting, Ye Quan and Ye Tianwen. In a flash, the three of them arrived by Jing Mingfeng's side while Tianming caught up to them later with gasping breaths at the door--he had been weaker than them, so it was inevitable that he was slower as well.

Tianming had been discussing with Ye Ting and the others about what had happened in the Aroma Delicacy moments before this had happened and had been able to sense the explosion of soulforce the moment it happened. The four of them had all been startled when it did happen and immediately stood up to run towards the courtyard. Without hesitation, they ran even closer to see what was happening, and from there, Tianming had been utterly at a loss for words at what he saw.

"Master Jing, what's....going on here?" Ye Ting asked in confusion as he took in the situation in front of him.

Chapter 151: I'm Not Too Familiar With It

"Master Jing, what's....going on here?" Ye Ting asked in confusion as he took in the situation in front of him.

Jing Mingfeng hadn't even bothered to turn his head around to answer Ye Ting and instead spoke with narrowed eyes, "I'm not too sure. But it seems that ol'Bai is forming a soul contract with the fifth-tier thunderbird."

"What? A fifth-tier thunderbird!" Ye Ting spoke in astonishment. He knew that Bai Yunfei had killed the men from the Beast Taming School, but whatever soulbeasts he had consequently captured was unknown to the man. Furthermore, he had not once thought that it would be possible for him to form a soul contract with a soulbeast puppet.

Ye Ting and the others hadn't asked any more of Jing Mingfeng when they saw the anxious look on his face. Instead, they cast their eyes towards the center of attraction where the red and purple light were still shining brightly.

"It really is a thunderbird!" Ye Ting had cried out to himself internally. To him, it was an absolute shock that a fifth-tier soulbeast would suddenly appear out of nowhere. "A fifth-tier soulbeast! For the sake of a fifth-tier soulbeast, the Zhao swore allegiance to the Beast Taming School. And now Bai Yunfei used some sort of secret to form a soul contract with one that's far stronger than him. What....what type of human is he?"

"Boom!"

An explosion had rocked the place simultaneous to Ye Ting's thoughts. Bai Yunfei's soulforce had stretched out briefly and then receded back into himself once more so that the two lights would be divided as well. When Bai Yunfei leapt back several meters, the red light around him dissipated and seemed to start examining the thunderbird right in front of him.

When the human and soulbeast were split apart from one another, the red and purple light had disappeared from sight. The thunderbird looked as if it had grown motionless, but to Bai Yunfei's sharp eyes, he could see that in the eyes of the bird, there was a small sliver of life to them.

"What's....what's going on?" Ye Ting cried out in alarm. He could clearly tell that the soul contract had reached a conclusion, but the actions of Bai Yunfei looked like he was giving up. Such a reaction like this had confused him terribly.

Swiftly, Jing Mingfeng ran to Bai Yunfei with narrowed eyes at the thunderbird. "Ol'Bai, what's happening here? Is this....that thunderbird? How did you form a soul contract with it? And what happened to that anyways?"

"I'm not too sure either. But I can see that this change in the thunderbird has to do with it failing to self-destruct earlier. I'm not sure of the specifics, but I can at least sense that it regained some of its sentience." Bai Yunfei shook his head as if to clear his head. "Up until now, I didn't even know that it wanted to form a soul contract with me. Good thing I was fast enough to decline."

"What! You actually gave up the chance to form a soul contract with a fifth-tier soulbeast?!" Jing Mingfeng cried out with wide eyes of shock towards Bai Yunfei.

"Yea. I'm not familiar with it after all." Bai Yunfei nodded.

"Not familiar...." Jing Mingfeng's lips twitched slightly as if he was thinking to himself, "It's a good thing I know just what type of person you are, or else I'd say you're a pretentious prick."

"Ah, the thunderbird won't go back into the space rings from the Beast Taming School, what should we do about it?" Bai Yunfei whispered to Jing Mingfeng as they watched the thunderbird.

Jing Mingfeng shrugged his shoulders, "How should I know? You're the one that started it, you figure it out."

“Then how about this. Why don’t you form a soul contract with it? Now that it’s starting to regain sentience, it’s not too out of the question. You and it can form a soul contract, that should kick start it back to full sentience.” Bai Yunfei proposed to him.

“.....”

“.....”

Jing Mingfeng had been speechless. Similarly, the other people who had heard him like Ye Ting had been utterly at a loss.

Imagine that—giving away the chance to form a soul contract with a fifth-tier soulbeast just like that!

Ever since he had laid eyes on Bai Yunfei, Ye Ting had been forever shocked by every move and action Bai Yunfei did. Even now, Ye Ting felt as if his heart was constantly being stabbed. When he looked at Jing Mingfeng, he could not help but feel jealous.

But then who would have imagined that Jing Mingfeng would recover first from his silence to shake his head and say, “Forget it. I may want a soulbeast partner, I want it to be of the wind affinity. The thunder affinity doesn’t suit me. I’ll look for another one later.”

It was not as if it one would be incapable of forming a soul contract with a soulbeast of a different affinity. But many people were more favorable to the idea of forming a soul contract with one that did since it would complement them beautifully.

Ye Ting was left practically unable to breathe. His eyes looked to Jing Mingfeng with a queer light—he had never once really paid attention to the one that had appeared out of nowhere with Bai Yunfei. But he knew now that this person was unpredictable too!

The next few words of Bai Yunfei had once more raised the bar of what Ye Ting could possibly endure.

“Oh, then....forget it.” Bai Yunfei nodded. But then his eyebrows

flew up as if he had been hit by an epiphany. Turning to look at Ye Ting with a smile, he spoke, “Lord Ye, if I recall correctly, you’re a soul cultivator with the thunder affinity, correct? Why not have you form a soul contract with it?”

Not a single breath of air was left in Ye Ting’s mouth to gasp out. Staggering backwards a single step, he had to have Ye Quan support him from behind. Finally being able to take in two gasping breaths, he spoke with a quavering voice, “Lo-lord Bai....what are you saying?”

“I’ll give you this thunderbird.” Came the response.

“.....”

“Brother Bai, are you being serious?” Are you really going to give such an amazing soulbeast to my father?” After a period of silence, the first to respond was Tianming. He was a pure-hearted child and didn’t understand the underlying implications of Bai Yunfei’s actions. He had only thought that it would be rather cool for his father to have a soulbeast companion.

“Yea, that way, lord Ye should be able to make the breakthrough to become a Soul Ancestor. In the upcoming battle with the Zhao, this should be enough to clinch victory.” Bai Yunfei nodded once before warning, “But it’d be best if you don’t let anyone else know about the thunderbird. Let it recover its sentience completely and see if there’s any other abnormalities before you reveal it.”

He was not planning to be the one to tell them that this soulbeast was taken from the Beast Taming School.

It was with this that Ye Ting snapped back to awareness. Giving a glance at Ye Quan, he tried to quell his emotions before facing Bai Yunfei with some hesitation. “Lord Bai, do you truly plan to give me this thunderbird?”

“What? Don’t tell me lord Ye doesn’t want a soulbeast partner?” Bai Yunfei smiled.

“No no, that’s not it...” Ye Ting shook his hands awkwardly. “If you say so then....I offer you my thanks, lord Bai. You have done the house of Ye a great deal of kindness. Even if all of our teeth fall out from old age, not a single member of my house will forget your kind deeds. If there is anything we can offer or help you with, you may only need to ask and we will not refuse it!”

“Lord Ye is far too kind. This thunderbird still hasn’t regained full clarity, so it’d be best if lord Ye moves closer. Send your soulforce into its body and you should be able to establish a contract with it. But please promise me this, lord Ye, do not mistreat this soulbeast. I only hope that you will not treat it as a slave or tool of war.”

Ye Ting nodded, “That goes without saying. Lord Bai, you may rest assured I will not treat it as such.”

And so Ye Ting prepared to make contact with the thunderbird and form a contract with it. Jing Mingfeng and Tianming stayed behind to watch the ‘fun’ while Bai Yunfei returned to his own room to rest.

Seated back on his bed, Bai Yunfei blinked once before raising his right hand in front of him. Staring at it hard, he watched as a flash of red light sparked to life on his palm before turning into a small fire that danced across his palmtop.

But the curious thing about this was that hidden within the crimson fire was a slight sliver of purple light.

Looking at the fire on his hand, Bai Yunfei muttered, “And who would have thought that I’d gain something from that....”

Chapter 152: Unexpected Windfall

Looking at the fire on his hand, Bai Yunfei muttered, “And who would have thought that I’d gain something from that....”

What had just happened prior to this had been a very strange soul contract process. Bai Yunfei didn’t really know what to expect in a normal situation, but he was very confident that it would not be like this.

He had declined the the soul contract, but Bai Yunfei had managed to take back a wisp of the thunderbird’s soul with him. And from that, he had gained something—a strand of essence thunderseed.

And when he took it, it had fused with his essence fireseed. Although it was practically negligible with just a single strand, it had also given Bai Yunfei a rich enough understanding of several new aspects on learning thunder arts. Furthermore, it would help with his rate of growth.

But the events of today wasn’t something that Bai Yunfei really understood. What really made him happen had been the other thing he had taken into his own body—soulforce.

Back during the soul contract process, the thunderbird had not rejected Bai Yunfei in any capacity and had instead allowed the essence origin and soulforce from its body to mix with Bai Yunfei’s. When Bai Yunfei removed himself from the equation, the thunderbird had been motionless, thus allowing Bai Yunfei to take its soulforce into his own body. Unlike the normal case where this foreign soulforce would dissipate over time, the thunderbird’s soulforce would instead be absorbed into Bai Yunfei’s soulforce and serve to increase his capacity.

And so...that meant Bai Yunfei was already all the more closer to “The Late-stage Soul Sprite realm!” Bai Yunfei shrugged away the fire in his hands and allowed his soulforce to cycle around his

body. “I didn’t think that I’d be able to gain so much soulforce in a moment. If I continue onwards like this then....”

“That’s not right either actually. If I were to keep trying this, it’s not a guaranteed thing that I’ll be able to always refuse the soul contracts. Plus, ‘stealing’ soulforce like this could possibly injure the thunderbird and any other soulbeast—I can’t be too greedy....This much already is more than enough.” Bai Yunfei shook his head as if he was looking down on himself for his avarice.

“A Late-stage Soul Sprite. I’m only a small point away. If I have to give a numerical value to it, I should be twenty soulpoints away maybe? Who knows how much more I need, or what threshold I have to pass? I’ll test it in a bit, maybe I’ll become a Late-stage Soul Sprite tonight....”

“But before that, there’s still a question that needs to be answered first....” Bai Yunfei thought for a moment before retrieving several spirit increasing accessories out from his space ring. From when he got them to now, these accessories were only +8 at most. There weren’t many of these to begin with, and Bai Yunfei didn’t want to risk exploding them.

“These increase soulforce when worn, and soul cultivators become stronger with even more soulforce. So according to logic, if I wear these items, I’ll be able to increase my soulforce and cross over this ‘threshold’. But....” Putting the accessories on, Bai Yunfei closed his eyes and waited.

After several moments, Bai Yunfei reopened his eyes to reveal a pensive look. “What a strange feeling. I’ve clearly more soulforce than before, but I didn’t move up a realm. Does that mean to say that wearing items that increase soulforce doesn’t count towards my total? How complicated....”

When it came to spirit increasing accessories, Bai Yunfei had made his own inquiries and research since it related to soulforce,

the very basis of what made up a soul cultivator. The most important part was the fact that the soulpoints that were gained with the accessories worn did not give as much as he would normally gain if he cultivated.

He had once believed that if he was close to empty with his soulforce, he could wear one of the spirit increasing accessories and add another hundred soulpoints. Then, with the hundred soulpoints, he could use it up and then take off the item without feeling the drain. Then, he could wear it again and repeat the process—wouldn’t this mean that he would have unlimited soulforce?

Of course, a bug like this wasn’t possible. In the face of the laws to this world, the Upgrade Technique had to be changed to a certain degree so that it would co-exist with those laws. If Bai Yunfei were to have the complete and intact memories of the slider who reincarnated into this world, then he would have been far more familiar with this research. But since his memories were fragmented and sealed into the depth of his soul and his strength was lacking in being able to unlock them, Bai Yunfei could only progress normally.

As a result, Bai Yunfei had been dismayed to find out the results to the experiment. It was not as perfect as he thought. In this example, if Bai Yunfei were to have ten soulpoints and then wear a ring that gave him another hundred soulpoints, he’d have a total of a hundred and ten soulpoints. But then if he used up a hundred soulpoints and then took off the ring, it didn’t mean he’d have ten soulpoints left. How convenient would that be? He’d go into the negatives in fact....that was to say, he’d expend more soulforce than he had and would immediately faint from the overdraft.

Bai Yunfei had spent the rest of his time familiarizing himself with this new portion of soulforce in his body before Jing Mingfeng came in to find him for dinner. It was from him that Bai Yunfei learned that Ye Ting had already formed a soul contract

with the thunderbird and became a Soul Ancestor. Bai Yunfei had been rather startled to hear that since he hadn't felt a thing from his own room. Maybe it was because he was so enthralled in his newly discovered powers, or maybe it was because Ye Ting had purposely masked the influx of energy that came with the soul contract well enough.

And with Jing Mingfeng 'keeping the peace' for him, Bai Yunfei was free to spend the rest of the night after dinner upgrading his items,

About an hour later....

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +63 Spirit

+10 Additional Effect: Another 300 soulpoints can be stockpiled for later use without consideration for the total soulpoint count in the user.

Upgrade Requirement: 30 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei's eyes had sparkled when he smiled gleefully at this space ring. "It stockpiles soulpoints? Not bad! Haha, that's good, my luck today is pretty good! This is an unexpected windfall."

This was one of the space rings he obtained from the ones from the Beast Taming School. He had already exploded four rings before so he didn't expect to have one of them to have such a nice additional effect when it reached +10. This could be said to be a small treasure.

"Three hundred soulpoints, that's enough for me to use the Winged Flame Blades once. If I'm lucky, it can be used as the killing blow!" Bai Yunfei nodded his head in satisfaction before he wore it on his left hand.

Looking at the two space rings on his hands, Bai Yunfei shook his head bitterly. Just slightly, he looked like some sort of rich upstart. But in the end really, as long as it increased his own strength, it wouldn't really matter.

The ring on his right hand was a space ring that helped recover his soulforce. There was another ring that increase his speed (agility) thanks to it's +10 effect. He was currently using the speed ring, but if he needed to use the spirit increasing ring, then he could swap it out quick enough to make use of its effects. In the ordinary times, wearing the speed ring would be best. That way, he would be able to deal with trouble should it come at any time.

Bai Yunfei had already felt his vision start to blur from his upgrade session. Shaking his head, he took out another one of his +9 equipment and rubbed his head. “I’ve about 3975 soulpoints in my body.....would this mean the ‘threshold’ to becoming a late-stage Soul Sprite would be 4000 soulpoints?”

“Then let’s go one last time....upgrade!”

Chapter 153: Late-stage Soul Sprite

Whilst Bai Yunfei was trying hard to upgrade his way to becoming a late-stage Soul Sprite, Ye Ting was trying his best to consolidate his strength as a Soul Ancestor. And over at the Liu, Liu Kun was currently waiting on and receiving an unexpected visitor.

Zhao Xiluo.

He had been a citizen of Gaoyi City through thick and thin. But then ten years ago, this hot-blooded youngster had disappeared without a trace. And now, he had returned just as quietly one sudden night. More importantly, he was visiting the Liu that same night!

But what shocked Liu Kun the most was his strength--mid-stage Soul Ancestor!

In a short ten years, he went from a Soul Warrior to a mid-stage Soul Ancestor. An achievement like this was tantamount to being considered as the number one genius of Gaoyi City. It was an impossibility--unless he came across a miraculous encounter.

"It seems that the house of Zhao will be the ones with the final say in Gaoyi City! The Liu will rely on the Wood School to safeguard our independence, but the Ye...."

Ceasing his pensive thoughts, Liu Kun smiled at the Zhao Xiluo who was drinking his tea calmly. "It's been ten years since we last met, nephew Zhao. What an outstanding youth you are. The way I see it, us old fogeys should bow our heads in shame and retire, haha...."

"Now now, uncle Liu. In the eyes of the senior generation, we will forever be the younger generation." Zhao Xiluo put down his teacup with a modest voice. "I only wish to focus on my cultivation and not about the management of my household. I managed to

earn my master's permission to leave the school and return home to see if my parents were doing well. In a short while, I'll have to leave once more."

"Oh? So you've been spending all this time cultivating within a school? Which school might that be, if I may inquire....?"

"Ten years ago when I left home ever so impulsively, I managed to be rescued by my teacher from the dangers of the world. He took me in as his disciple and granted me admission into the Water School. It is all because of my great teacher that I own the achievements I have today. I have spoken with my father already, our house of Zhao will stand with the Water School." Zhao Xiluo smiled as he responded to Liu Kun while also willingly giving him the answer Liu Kun wanted.

"Ah, so it's the Water School!" Liu Kun spoke in amazement. But then his face twisted up in confusion, "Eh? The Zhao stands with the Water School? What about the Beast Taming School?"

"They have already left. And they won't be coming back either. I'll be managing the affair with the house of Ye as well."

"Oh, then...." Liu Kun furrowed his eyebrows in thought, "Then nephew Zhao, you came to my home today for....?"

"Haha, uncle Liu, did you forget already? I only just said that I'm a disciple of the Water School. The Water and the Wood have quite a nice relationship with one another...."

"What does that have to--the Wood School? Nephew Zhao, do you mean to say that...."

Zhao Xiluo nodded his head with a smile, "Correct. I came here in Liu Pingxiong's place to hand over a letter. I went to the Wood School once and met with Liu Pingxiong who was currently hard at work cultivating. He wanted me to send a letter back home for him.

From his space ring, Zhao Xiluo retrieved a letter and handed it

over to Liu Kun.

It had been with quavering hands and a beating heart that Liu Kun looked to Zhao Xiluo amiably. “How strange to see that nephew Zhao is acquaintances with Ping’er. How rare indeed.”

“Yes. The continent is a vast one, but I suppose even events like this happen every so often. When I first saw Liu Pingxiong at the Water School, I was startled to say the least.”

Liu Kun had been able to relax a lot more after he knew that Zhao Xiluo was a disciple of the Water School. From today onwards, the Zhao and the Liu would never be enemies. He was very amicable towards Zhao Xiluo now and was extremely willing to pull the gap closer to be friends with the Zhao.

“Ah, uncle Liu, I wished to inquire about a person.” After a lull in the conversation, Zhao Xiluo had immediately spoke up once more.

“Eh?” Liu Kun was surprised, “Which person?”

“In the past few days, has there been a youth named Bai Yunfei that came by?”

“How did you know?” Liu Kun started.

“Oh? So he has come then? Has he stayed within your home as a guest? Or perhaps is he still in Gaoyi City still?” Zhao Xiluo’s eyes lit up as he asked.

“Nephew Zhao, how did you come to learn of Bai Yunfei? Furthermore, how did you learn that he came to the Liu before...?” Liu Kun asked with furrowed eyebrows.

“Haha, uncle Liu, don’t think too much about it. I only reason I know is because I managed to meet with senior You Qingfeng of the Wood School on my way back. He mentioned this person before so I thought I should at least ask around.”

Relaxing, Liu Kun replied, “Ah, so that’s why. How coincidental

then. Lord Bai came by this afternoon to see me. He's still in the city in fact."

"Is that so? Is he a guest in your home then?"

Thinking about it, Liu Kun spoke, "That...isn't quite it. He came with the second scion of the house of Ye, Ye Tianming. He's currently staying with the Ye."

It came to him now that the current situation was feeling a bit dramatic.

"The Ye?"

Zhao Xiluo had been distracted, but his face had an odd expression to it. Quickly resuming his calm demeanor, Zhao Xiluo stood up to speak to Liu Kun. "It's getting late, so this junior will be leaving first. I'll make a visit another day then."

"Ah, yes. If you could pass along a message to your father saying if he can join me for tea tomorrow. It has been a long time since the two of us spoke."

The first rays of sunlight made its way through the windows and dispersed the inherent dusk from within the room. On the bed, Bai Yunfei was just starting to blink away the weariness from his eyes.

Sitting upright on his bed, Bai Yunfei placed both his hands on his waist and stretched it out. A series of cracking sounds could be heard as he stretched and popped the joints in his body. A slight red light had appeared around his body, but then with a long exhale in satisfaction from Bai Yunfei, the light disappeared.

"Late-stage Soul Sprite....it really does need more than just luck to arrive at this stage earlier than expected! This feeling isn't just a small increase in soulpoints or soulforce!" Bai Yunfei clenched his fist in satisfaction of this abundant power running through his body. With how much soulforce that was running through his body, Bai Yunfei could see that he had already passed 4000 soulpoints to become a late-stage Soul Sprite. He felt far stronger

than before, but whether or not this was just an illusion, he wasn't sure.

Taking a dagger that had been dropped next to his bed, Bai Yunfei could see that his final upgrade to it had been successful rather than an explosive failure.

Equipment Grade: Superior

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 147

Additional Attack: 97

+10 Additional Effect: When thrown, the speed and attack power of the dagger will be increased by 30%

Upgrade Requirement: 64 Soulpoints

Weighing the dagger in his hand, Bai Yunfei remarked to himself, "This is slightly worse than the Glacial Pricker With another 30% added, that brings the attack power to around 300 almost. That's the same as a middle rare...."

After storing the dagger away, Bai Yunfei looked out the gradually brightening skies outside the window. "It was a peaceful night. Seems like the Zhao didn't come to pick a fight at all last night. Will they give up the fight today? Or will they come seeking retribution?"

Just as Bai Yunfei opened the doors to his room, the servants that had been waiting outside his room since earlier in the day greeted him with a washbasin and a towel to wash up. Accepting the items in stride, Bai Yunfei washed himself and ate his breakfast before a maid came to him. "Lord Bai, the master wishes to invite you to the halls to discuss some matters."

"Ah, got it. I'll be going then...."

Chapter 154: Zhao Xiluo's Visit

It was only when Bai Yunfei arrived at the lounge that he realized Jing Mingfeng and the others were already there before him.

Jing Mingfeng and the Ye were all chatting casually, Tianming had been most especially enthusiastic in his conversation. The others had been smiling while occasionally offering up their own words. When Bai Yunfei entered the room and saw the resplendent face of Ye Ting, he could see that there was now a very palpable difference between the two of them. There was an august aura to him, and his face reflected the confident expression of a can-do person.

When Bai Yunfei entered the room, the eyes of everyone had gathered onto him. Ye Ting and Ye Quan both had raised their eyebrows in surprise--they had seen the spike of power that happened in Bai Yunfei evidently.

“He became a late-stage Soul Sprite in a single night!” Ye Ting cried out in alarm to himself, but the emotions were not noticeable on his face too much. He knew that Bai Yunfei was a mid-stage Soul Sprite, but he didn’t ask at the time if Bai Yunfei had only just became one or was already close to being a late-stage Soul Sprite. At the time, he had guessed Bai Yunfei was the latter of the two and that last night had been a coincidental breakthrough. Of course, he was already starting to become accustomed to just how often Bai Yunfei exceeded everyone’s expectations, so this newest occurrence did not bring too much surprise to him.

But even to the weaker Bai Yunfei, Ye Ting didn’t dare neglect his manners. Standing up from his seat, Ye Ting smiled widely and congratulated him, “Lord Bai, congratulations! A late-stage Soul Sprite at such a tender young age! Lord Bai, your talent is truly astounding; it’s a talent that would make everyone else jealous!”

Bai Yunfei smiled and nodded his head to everyone before taking

a seat next to Jing Mingfeng. “Lord Ye,” He smiled, “You flatter me too much. I’ve only had a chance opportunity. If anything, I should be the one congratulating lord Ye on successfully breaking through to become a Soul Ancestor. The house of Ye will surely have its era of brilliance starting this moment onwards.”

“Haha, my household is only a small one, not some sort of major house lord Bai says it is. My breakthrough was only because of lord Bai’s assistance. This benevolent favor lord Bai has granted to me will not be one the Ye will ever forget!” Ye Ting proclaimed courteously as he professed his thanks.

Bai Yunfei hadn’t been too modest in his acceptance of Ye Ting’s words. It was only natural to accept and return this gesture. If he treated Ye Ting’s thanks with indifference, then it would be meaningless to help to begin with.

“Ah, lord Ye. How goes business with the Zhao?” Bai Yunfei had naturally wished to know the reason why everyone here was talking or listening to Jing Mingfeng gossip so much that even Ye Ting would bother to listen.

Ye Ting’s face hardened as soon as Bai Yunfei spoke. “There is indeed something strange going on with the Zhao. Ever since last night, their doors have been closed and not a sound could be heard from the outside. None of our men were even able to bribe any information from the insiders of the clan, so none of us are sure of what’s going on.”

“But....the most recent information we got was that just last night, some of the men that we placed in charge of watching the Zhao noticed those from the Beast Taming School leave the Zhao residence. After they left the city, they never came back.”

“Oh?” Bai Yunfei was surprised. “The men from the Beast Taming School left? How could that be? Are they perhaps going to look after the other men?”

“That shouldn’t be it. From what we heard from the others, the

group had looked extremely angry, but they were acting as if they were chased off. The men we had look after them weren't strong enough to follow them for too long though. We have no way of really knowing if they really did leave Gaoyi City."

"They were chased away? Did the Zhao chase them off? Would they even do that?" Bai Yunfei questioned.

"There'd be no way. Unless Zhao Xing wants to ruin his family, he'd do no such thing. How could they make enemies with the Beast Taming School?" Ye Ting was unsure himself. "But the way things are going right now don't follow up with our expectations. All of our preparational work so far has been for naught....but I am a Soul Ancestor now! Pah, let's see them try and demand tribute from my house of Ye now!"

After spending so many days being stifled by the Zhao, Ye Ting's anger had finally reached a boiling point. Now that the Zhao finally lost their patron, Ye Ting was already starting to think of a way to plan his revenge.

At that moment, a person suddenly came running in with great haste. Reporting to Ye Ting, he spoke, "My lord....someone....someone from the house of Zhao has arrived!"

Startled by that information, Ye Ting took a sharp intake of breath, "What? Someone from the Zhao is here? Are they here to talk about what happened yesterday? Pah! Zhao Xing is an arrogant and conceited fool then! With the Beast Taming School laying down the pressure, I'd be willing to bite my tongue and bear my anger. But if the Beast Taming School is gone, then there's no way I'd let the Zhao bully this household!"

"N-no, my lord. Lord Zhao did not come. Instead, it's a young man. He said that....he said that his name is Zhao Xiluo and said that he personally came to pay his respects to the lord and also apologize for his younger brother's conduct...."

"What? Zhao Xing isn't here? Offering his apologies? What

apologies? Hold on....who did you say was here?" Ye Ting suddenly halted in his speech with surprise. "What did you say his name was!"

"He-he said he was...Zhao...Zhao Xiluo...."

"What? That kid Zhao Xiluo is back!" Ye Quan had finally broken his silence with a loud gasp. "When he left ten years ago, the entire city thought that he died already, but he's alive and well now? And at this time too....that must mean....that must mean he's the reason why the Beast Taming School left!"

"Zhao Xiluo is back!" Even Ye Ting was surprised. Growing silent for a second, he then spoke, "No matter what the situation is, we have to look before we act. If the Zhao sends someone over, then the Ye will naturally receive him with 'haste'...."

As he spoke, Ye Ting looked off towards the direction where Bai Yunfei was as if trying to ask for his opinions. "Lord Bai, please don't mind us." Bai Yunfei smiled. "We'll stand by the side as you receive your guests."

And so as Ye Ting strode towards the entrance to receive the guest, Bai Yunfei and the rest followed him from behind. To the side, Jing Mingfeng asked Tianming, "Who's this Zhao Xiluo? Why haven't we heard about him before?"

"He's the eldest son of the Zhao. Ten years ago, he left Gaoyi City and never returned. I was a lot younger back then, so I don't remember much. But I remember big brother once saying that Zhao Xiluo was an amazing guy...."

"Zhao Xiluo was said to be the most talented person of his generation. But since he left so many years ago, not many people remember him. I hadn't expect to see that he'd return out of the blue like this. But his strength should definitely be at the late-stage Soul Sprite at the very least I'd assume. Back then, he was stronger than even me...." Ye Tianwen offered his two bits of interesting information to Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng as if to explain the

situation to them.

“So the Zhao still had a person like that....then he really has to be the reason why the Beast Taming School left then. If he’s representing the house of Zhao here, I wonder what he’s trying to get at. Ugh! The situation has taken off into a direction I wasn’t expecting....” Bai Yunfei sighed to himself. “I guess I’ll have to watch what to do next.”

Chapter 155: Reconciliation

Just as the entourage from the Ye came out to the entrance, three figures could be seen walking in through the gates.

Bai Yunfei recognized two of them straight away. While his entire head was wrapped as heavily as a mummy, the peculiar shape of the body could still be seen quite clearly. It was the second son of the Zhao, fatty Zhao Liang. The other person had a slightly worse-for-wear middle-aged face, but Bai Yunfei could recognize him to be the one he had slapped unconscious, Zhao Ye.

The one leading the two from the front was a young man with robes of blue and a straight back. His face was adorned with a kind and modest smile, giving off an amiable impression to whoever saw him—it was the long lost son of the house of Zhao, Zhao Xiluo.

It didn't seem like Zhao Xiluo was hiding back any malicious intent, so when Ye Ting and the others drew close to being able to see him, they were all able to sense the tremendous power that radiated from him. It was infact a power that was stronger than Ye Ting himself.

“Mid-stage Soul Ancestor!”

Bai Yunfei's eyes widened at that. He could see that this man wasn't past the thirties, and yet, he was still a person who reached the Mid-stage Soul Ancestor realm. Being called the “Number One Genius of Gaoyi City” was not for naught it would seem.

Everyone came to a stop along with Zhao Xiluo and the other two just several meters apart. From there, Zhao Xiluo bowed respectfully to Ye Ting and spoke equally respectfully, “Uncle Ye, it has been many years since we last met. Perhaps you still remember this nephew?”

Ye Ting had been in a state of shock when he first registered Zhao Xiluo's strength. It had been transparent on his face as well. He

who had finally made the breakthrough to become a Soul Ancestor could be said to be an expert of the area. It was with this strength that Ye Ting had planned on fighting the Zhao. But then someone of the next generation had suddenly arrived out of nowhere with the strength of a mid-stage Soul Ancestor. An arrival like that had evaporated his confidence and left him in a state of mourning—Perhaps the Ye really would be subjugated by the Zhao?

But when those words of Zhao Xiluo were said, Ye Ting relaxed just slightly. From what it looked like, Zhao Xiluo wasn't here to seek trouble.

Adjusting his emotions, Ye Ting smiled and nodded his head, "Nephew Xiluo, it's been ten years! Having a youngster like you reach such a realm like that; why, you could leave us older folks blushing in shame!"

After exchanging several words of conversation with Ye Ting, Zhao Xiluo then spoke one by one with the other members. Based off of how he was speaking, he seemed as if he wasn't aware of the resentment between both the Zhao and Ye.

Though Zhao Xiluo had been rather surprised himself. He had been told beforehand that Ye Ting was only a late-stage Soul Sprite, but from the looks of things, he was clearly an early-stage Soul Ancestor.

"Nephew Xiluo, your parents must be happy to see your safe return, right? What business might you have today with my household?" Ye Ting looked to behind Zhao Xiluo at Zhao Liang and Zhao Ye. He hadn't spoken at all to invite the three into the receiving room as he was after all, the lord of a household. Furthermore, he was a Soul Ancestor. He could not so simply be bullied by an even stronger Soul Ancestor so easily. The meaning behind his words had been clear as well; Why aren't you home with your parents? What reason do you have to run off to here for?

But Zhao Xiluo had continued to smile as if he didn't mind the

unspoken meaning. Turning his head to look at Zhao Liang to his left, Zhao Xiluo signaled to him with a stare.

“Brother....” Because of the fact that Zhao Liang’s face was heavily bandaged like a mummy, his facial expression was hard to see. But from his voice alone, it was clear to hear that he sounded reluctant to do whatever it was that his brother told him to do.

Zhao Xiluo’s eyebrows furrowed together. “What? Are you going to ignore your older brother?”

“N-no....” The fatty spoke as if cowed by Zhao Xiluo. Even if it had been ten years since they last met, he was still afraid. Bowing his head and taking two steps forward, he bowed deeply to Ye Ting. “Uncle Ye, this nephew was acting silly before and offended miss Ye Yan. Furthermore, this nephew started a feud between our two families—all due to my mistake. Your nephew hopes that uncle Ye will forgive this one. Whatever punishment uncle Ye has, this nephew will receive it without a word of complaint.”

“.....”

This sudden ‘honest’ apology from Zhao Liang had caught everyone from the house of Ye off guard. From how Zhao Liang was haunched, it felt as if he wouldn’t dare to move until someone forgave him. Hesitating for a brief moment, Ye Ting turned to Zhao Xiluo as if unsure how to respond, “Nephew Xiluo, what is....”

“It is exactly what little Liang is saying. Your nephew came here with this express purpose to apologize. Little Liang has done wrong by offending miss Ye Yan. And because of his pampered nature, he created friction between the house of Zhao and the house of Ye which led to a greater conflict between our two houses with a third party instigating even more discord. With my return, I’ve already shooed away those people who would do us harm. I hope uncle Ye will be kind and not bother about someone like little Liang. I also hope that the conflict between our two households will cease here

and live in peaceful coexistence.”

His words were spoken in earnest, but it had still sounded rather funny when it was spoken. The two houses were practically ready to tear the faces of one another off—did he really believe that words would solve such a conflict so easily?

But Ye Ting did not smile. And it had been because of a small tidbit of information he heard from Zhao Xiluo—those ‘instigators’ had been chased away by him!

He knew that Zhao Xiluo was talking about the Beast Taming School. He could confirm that the Beast Taming School left already as well, and now, he had confirmation that it was Zhao Xiluo that did it!

So these words had caused him to consider and think more heavily into the meaning behind Zhao Xiluo’s words. Ye Ting was more than aware that Zhao Xiluo was capable and bold enough to ‘shoo away’ the Beast Taming School. This had meant that he was strong enough to do so. In the past, he perhaps could not, but right now, the Xiluo of today was definitely either someone capable or had an even great patron behind him.

Having thought about it, Ye Ting spoke carefully without having his words promising anything, “Nephew Xiluo. If I may be so bold to ask. In these past ten years, might you have joined with some sort of school?”

Nodding his head calmly without bothering to hide the facts, Zhao Xiluo replied, “Uncle Ye is correct. I have joined the Water School as a disciple under the great teacher Yang Linhao.”

“The vice-headmaster of the Water School!” Ye Ting’s heart skipped a beat. He hadn’t expected that Zhao Xiluo had joined with one of the five elemental schools and became a disciple of the vice-headmaster himself. What this meant was that Zhao Xiluo had indeed the power to shoo away the Beast Taming School. The Beast Taming School wouldn’t start conflict with the Water School over

an insignificant house either, so they had bowed out.

“No wonder they were so confident....Alas! The Liu has the Wood, and the Zhao has finally managed to win over the Water. It would appear that the Ye will sing its swan song in this city. But....for what reason is Zhao Xiluo speaking so politely and offering his apologies then?”

As Ye Ting’s mind raced furiously in thought, he could only sigh at his inability to understand. What he did understand however, was that the house of Zhao was finally laying out all of their cards on the table. The Ye had no other choice but to accept this ‘apology’. If he didn’t, then a war between the two houses would be inevitable, and the Ye would only lose as a result. Could he even count on Bai Yunfei for assistance? Ye Ting wasn’t so foolish as to pass over the fate of his house over to an ‘outsider’.

“Haha! So nephew Xiluo has joined with the Water School! Your achievements and potential surely are limitless then! I presume brother Zhao would be gratified to have a child like you as his son? Haha, it’s true, there was conflict between our two houses, but if nephew Zhao is so honest in trying to resolve it, I shall be honest too. There is no way I would want my house to be involved in such a meaningless war, let us resolve our differences then....”

Zhao Xiluo revealed a pleased smile as he slapped the head of his younger brother. “Hurry up and thank uncle Ye!”

“Tha-thank you, uncle Ye.”

“.....”

Bai Yunfei had been rather dumbfounded from where he stood and his face was scrunched together in confusion.

“Is...is it really ending like this so quickly?”

Chapter 156: Sharing Pointers

Bai Yunfei had planned tentatively for a myriad of situations that might occur prior to now.

He had thought that the house of Zhao would muster up their forces to blame and punish the house of Ye for their crimes. And because of that thought, Bai Yunfei had prepared himself for war. He had prepared himself to fight the Soul Ancestor from the Beast Taming School. In the worst case scenario if he couldn't win against the Beast Taming School, Bai Yunfei was even prepared to use Ge Yiyun or perhaps You Qingfeng's name in order to intimidate the opponent and drag the house of Liu into this. It wasn't by any means an honest or kind tactic, but even the Zhao and the Beast Taming School wouldn't act too hastily if the Liu got involved. But this still didn't guarantee that the Ye would be safe from fighting.

Bai Yunfei had actually thought that the Zhao would already be prepared for a dark and dirty battle. After their attempt to kidnap Tianming, Bai Yunfei had not discounted the possibility of them preparing to start a raid. He had even considered giving Tianming several upgraded items to help strengthen himself.

There was also yet another plan that should his involvement in the death of the men from the Beast Taming School came to light, Bai Yunfei would disavow himself from the matters of the Ye and run as far away as possible.

He had thought of many possibilities and prepared for plenty of outcomes. But in the end, it had been for naught.

Ye Ting became a Soul Ancestor because of the thunderbird. The Beast Taming School had left Gaoyi City. And the genius son of the Zhao had finally returned home. Even now, he was making a fair and reasonable apology in an attempt to dissolve the conflict between the Ye and the Zhao.

“Well, it won’t be going down the few anticipated patterns I was expecting at least. He won’t be pretending to be the hero until the very last moment either I’m sure. There shouldn’t be anything going wrong now, or a loss for both sides either. Uh....that’s if the fatty doesn’t try anything else though.”

Bai Yunfei shook his head as if to console himself. But then Zhao Xiluo suddenly spoke out loud after his conversation with Ye Ting, “Ah, might there be a young brother by the name of Bai Yunfei staying as a guest here?”

Even as Zhao Xiluo spoke, his eyes had already traveled to where Bai Yunfei was as if deciding between him and Jing Mingfeng.

Not a single person there had expected to hear Zhao Xiluo suddenly ask for Bai Yunfei. This had prompted Jing Mingfeng to turn his head to his companion, “Ol’Bai, how does he know you, you friends with him?”

Bai Yunfei scrunched his eyebrows together, “Never seen him before.”

Everyone’s eyes had only pointed Bai Yunfei out from the others, causing Zhao Xiluo to be confirmed in his guess. Smiling, he spoke, “You must be brother Bai Yunfei, correct?”

Extending his hand to return the handshake Zhao Xiluo was giving, Bai Yunfei had remained stoic in the face. “I am he, what business might lord Zhao have with me?”

“Haha, I actually came to the house of Ye today for two reasons. One reason was to resolve this conflict between our two houses, and the other was to see you, brother Bai.”

“See me? What for?”

“Ah, I’ve actually heard about you from someone else before. So I’d would like to.....compare notes with you!”

Zhao Xiluo chuckled as he spoke the last part. But as soon as he finished, his feet pushed off from the ground and charged straight

at Bai Yunfei!

Zhao Xiluo had clearly been smiling and chatting normally a moment ago. But then in a split-second, he had charged straight towards Bai Yunfei! The people around him had been so caught off guard by this action that only Ye Ting had been fast enough to respond when Zhao Xiluo was already at Bai Yunfei's front, "Zhao Xiluo, what do you mean by this?"

Bai Yunfei had already been on guard before Zhao Xiluo had reached him. He was after all no stranger to having to protect himself at a moment's notice and had been on guard since the very beginning. Focusing completely on the person in front of him, Bai Yunfei had been able to react even faster than Ye Ting and the others in the time Zhao Xiluo had taken to act.

In the blink of an eye, Zhao Xiluo had already moved to grab at Bai Yunfei's right arm. Bai Yunfei on the other hand had shifted his feet so that they intertwined with one another. With a minute burst of the Wave Treading Steps he had managed to master after becoming a late-stage Soul Sprite, Bai Yunfei was able to shift past Zhao Xiluo without having to move too much to the side.

Zhao Xiluo's eyes had lit up almost as if he had been expecting this. A faint smile graced his face before his claw-like grip tightened into a fist to punch Bai Yunfei in the shoulder.

Lifting up his right and, Bai Yunfei had been able to block the punch while also taking advantage of the force to step backwards. His right hand drew back to wind up for a punch, and then without hesitation, he let it go at full force at Zhao Xiluo's chest.

But it had been caught by his opponent's right palm.

"Thump!"

The sound of fist hitting palm could be heard in the courtyard, but only Zhao Xiluo could be seen taking several staggering steps away from Bai Yunfei with the lights of his eyes gleaming even

brighter than before.

“Your punching strength isn’t bad, but it’s not up to my expectations of what I’ve heard about you before. Why don’t you show your actual strength?” Zhao Xiluo gently primed his right arm--even after taking Bai Yunfei’s Ninefold Fist Force, he looked as if he hadn’t been affected in the slightest!

“Aren’t you holding back too?” Bai Yunfei returned the smile. In that short moment of contact, he had already ascertained that Zhao Xiluo was only just testing his strength. Although he didn’t know the reason, Bai Yunfei had felt no reason why he shouldn’t live up to his opponent’ expectations. If anything--he was excited. How coincidental that he could test out his own strength right now!

Zhao Xiluo had been taken back for just a small moment before he laughed, “Okay, you be careful now then!”

With neither of the two at a disadvantage to the other, they begun their second round of ‘comparing notes’ under the stunned eyes of everyone around.

At the drop of his last words, Zhao Xiluo’s right arm had already been thrown outwards. There had been a blue light that permeated from within his fist. And in an instant, it covered his entire body. When he threw the right punch, the blue light had rippled in wave-like motions as if it was water. As it rippled and gathered in his fist, the blue light grew even richer and richer until with just two flashes later, three balls of water had formed from the elemental water he wielded.

In an instant, the ball of water gave a small squirm. A burst of frosty air followed its movements, and with a slight ‘tinkling’ sound, the air around the three spheres had turned them into three short icicles!

From the activation of his elemental water to them freezing over, it had only taken a blink of an eye for Zhao Xiluo to cast. He had

only needed to point his hand at Bai Yunfei's direction to have them shoot out towards him.

But Bai Yunfei hadn't been foolish enough to wait for his opponent to finish his attack and had already taken the opportunity to charge in.

Just about two steps in, the three icicles could already be heard whistling towards him. It had taken Bai Yunfei a single glance to realize that there was not much time to dodge and that the speed it was traveling at did not seem like it would slow down either. With no other choice, he brought his right arm up to protect himself.

Zhao Xiluo had paled in the face at that. When it came to the power of his own icicles, Zhao Xiluo knew just how deadly they could be. These icicles of his could stab through the arm of the early-stage Soul Ancestor Ye Ting, let alone the late-stage Soul Sprite, Bai Yunfei. He had summoned these icicles from the elemental water he controlled and could control them within a short distance with the use of his soulforce that was in it. Zhao Xiluo had thought that Bai Yunfei would decide to dodge the icicles just enough that they would not cause much damage, but how could he possibly predict that Bai Yunfei wouldn't actually dodge?

He only wanted to test Bai Yunfei's strength and see just what made this youngster so special in the eyes of a person like You Qingfeng. If Zhao Xiluo managed to heavily injure Bai Yunfei, then that would not look well for him either. But just as Zhao Xiluo was about to use his soulforce to move away the icicles, Bai Yunfei had already sped up just a bit, and under his astonished eyes Bai Yunfei swung his arms to smack away the icicles!

“Ting Ting Ting?”

Following the sounds of the icicles colliding with something, Zhao Xiluo had been astonished to find out that his icicles that could penetrate into the skin of a early-stage Soul Ancestor had been knocked away so easily by Bai Yunfei!

Bai Yunfei had been exceptionally timely with the swing of his arm. It had been neither fast nor slow, and when his arm had been slanted in that one moment; the very first icicle had landed at the front of his elbow where the edge of the Flame-edge Bracer was. This had meant the bracer had successfully blocked the first icicle and allowed the second to hit the middle part of it and the third one to hit the other end of the bracer.

And as soon as the bracer blocked all three, Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up with joy.

“Did I trigger the +10 effect of the Flame-edge Bracer?”

Chapter 157: The End

The +10 effect of the Flame-edge Bracer:

+10 Additional Effect: When blocking, there is a 9% chance of absorbing and converting the attack power into personal attack power, releasing it with your next attack.

(It can be held for 3 seconds. The amount of converted attack power cannot exceed the defensive strength of this item.)

Bai Yunfei had only planned on using the Flame-edge Bracer to block the icicles, but he didn't expect to have the +10 effect activate. A chilling sensation was absorbed into his bracer before traveling into his right arm and filling him with power. Unwilling to waste this precious chance, Bai Yunfei urged some soulforce into his feet and pushed off against the ground to immediately charge at Zhao Xiluo. His right fist clenched tightly before releasing a straightforward punch onto his chest.

A puzzled look flashed across Zhao Xiluo's eyes, but he didn't move to evade the strike. Instead, he took a half step back with his left foot and dropped his left arm down with his palm facing up while the right arm was moved up with the palm facing down. His arms were positioned as if he expected Bai Yunfei's punch to enter the middle, but his arms were not there to protect the chest.

Both of his hands swirled around an imaginary center around it, causing a blue fog to start to appear and condense in the middle. Soon enough, a sphere around the size of a fist had materialized in between.

Bai Yunfei's fist had passed through the blue sphere almost as quickly as it appeared and caused the power of his fist to weaken noticeably. The sphere itself felt as if it were made of some sort of sticky liquid, but there was a feeling of his power being drained

away. The deeper his fist sunk in, the stronger this draining force felt. As soon as the fist made it three inches deep, Bai Yunfei had felt the power in his fist already drop by a third. And the sphere itself had turned from a mist into a sphere of water with time. In a flash, the bright blue sphere created by Zhao Xiluo had formed between his hands had already covered the entire right fist of Bai Yunfei.

One second!

In a single second, the power behind Bai Yunfei's fist had been reduced to about half of its original strength, He could distinctly feel that the sphere itself was rapidly becoming like ice, and if he didn't hurry, then his entire right arm would be frozen by it!

The corners to Bai Yunfei's lips quirked in unease when he saw just how carefree Zhao Xiluo looked. At the same time, he let out a grunt and turned his right arm as much as he could.

Two seconds!

"Boom!"

A dazzling red light suddenly appeared from Bai Yunfei's right arm and sliced apart the sphere of water with a streak of fire. Under the wide-open eyes of everyone else, the water had exploded into every direction and evaporated into several streams of vapor and faded away from sight.

Three seconds!

And under Zhao Xiluo's startled eyes, Bai Yunfei's bright red fist had slammed against Zhao Xiluo's left shoulder.

"Bang!"

Zhao Xiluo took six staggering steps backwards, but with each stagger, the ground beneath him fractured under the pressure of his weight almost as if some sort of tremendous weight was being delivered from his shoulder down. Astonishment flooded Zhao Xiluo's eyes when he felt the bones in his shoulder seem to start to

fracture—Even though the punch had been weakened by several degrees, it was still enough to cause harm to a mid-stage Soul Ancestor like him. And this punch had been delivered to him by a late-stage Soul Sprite!

He hadn't been defending with his entire strength due to his shock of course, but because of this sudden development, he could only look at Bai Yunfei with a new light.

Zhao Xiluo had only just lifted his head up after receiving a boosted Ninefold Fist Force when he saw that Bai Yunfei had already chased up to him with a second strike ready to slam into him!

Narrowing his eyes with concentration, Zhao Xiluo chose not to evade again and sent out an equally strong right punch.

“Bang!”

When the two fists collided, a faint red and blue clash of light exploded from the fists. Zhao Xiluo had been forced to take another two light steps back while Bai Yunfei had faltered five steps back.

Overtaken by adrenaline to continue fighting, Bai Yunfei gave two shakes of his body to steady himself before sending some soulforce to his right arm. With a gentle shake of it to stabilize his right arm, Bai Yunfei prepared himself to attack again.

But just as Bai Yunfei took a single step forward, Zhao Xiluo smiled and waved his hands to say, “Haha, that's enough. We don't need to fight anymore.”

The elemental water that had been prevalent in the area had dissipated along with his soulforce, reinforcing the fact that Zhao Xiluo was done with comparing pointers.

Bai Yunfei's breathing had been hitched as a result from the backlash of the soulforce. Stopping in front of Zhao Xiluo, his face had been rather unsatisfied—"Are you mistaken? We only just

warmed up and you're done? Are you joking?"

He had really wanted to say, "I'm not satisfied yet, let's go at it again!".

But with so many people looking and even Zhao Xiluo smiling at him with the intent to stop fighting, Bai Yunfei could only restrain his soulforce reluctantly and without a word.

"Nephew Xiluo, what do you mean by this? Lord Bai is an honored guest of my house, what reason do you have to suddenly attack him?" Ye Ting strode to Bai Yunfei's side with furrowed eyebrows to stare at the transgressor. His aura as an early-stage Soul Ancestor was beginning to leak out, and his voice conveyed an unhappy tone to it.

"Haha! Uncle Ye, please quell your anger. I had no ill intentions at all. But seeing just how a youngster like brother Bai was able to become a late-stage Soul Sprite, I had only wished to compare notes with him, that's all." Zhao Xiluo clasped his hands together apologetically. "Brother Bai is by all rights a natural prodigy. Not only is his talent strong, his fighting capabilities aren't inferior to it. I can't help but admire such a strength."

Bai Yunfei's lips quirked upwards as he thought to himself, "It was only two moves. I didn't even get to use my other upgraded equipment, how could you possibly see how strong I was?"

Ignoring the fact that they were 'comparing notes', Bai Yunfei questioned him, "Then, going by what sir Zhao said, you've heard of me from someone else? Whom might that be?"

"Haha, there's no need for you to be so suspicious, brother Bai. To be honest, it was senior You Qingfeng from the Wood School. On my way back, I came to meet him by accident and he told me about you, brother Bai and how you might be passing by Gaoyi City. Uncle Liu told me that you'd be here at the Ye, so I decided that on my way here today I may as well see the young prodigy that senior You had in such high regards." Zhao Xiluo explained.

“Senior You....” The coldness on Bai Yunfei’s face melted away along with his suspicions. Nodding his head, he spoke, “I see now, I didn’t think that big brother Zhao would be acquaintances with senior You....”

“Ah, senior You forced me to pass on a message should I meet you saying that if you have the chance, you should go see the Wood School. He’s brought a little girl named Chu Yuhe with her, is that your sworn sister?”

“Yuhe was brought to the Wood School?” Bai Yunfei was taken back, but he nodded his head nonetheless. “Is that right? Thank you for passing on this message then, big brother Zhao.”

“Haha, I see now. Nephew Xiluo, you scared this old man half to death! I had thought that lord Bai and you had a grudge of some sort!” Ye Ting laughed before turning to the other people around him, “What are you all doing standing around? Hurry up and escort our guests to the receiving room.” He laughed.

Zhao Xiluo shook his head, “My apologies, but since I’ve accomplished what needs to be done today, I’ll need to return home to take care of a few matters. I’ll be taking my leave today, perhaps we can establish another day in the future to pay a visit again, uncle Ye.”

Chapter 158: Honorarium

Taking his younger brother with him, Zhao Xiluo left the place right after cordially inviting Bai Yunfei to come as a guest to the Zhao one day. And with several words of goodbye, the two brothers and uncle left.

Watching the three Zhao family men leave, the entire Ye family in audience had been speechless. They had originally believed that a fight to the death was inevitable, so how had this conflict suddenly resolve amicably with both sides becoming friends?

Ye Ting hung his head down low with a complicated expression on his face. The house of Ye had been put in a tizzy because of the bullying of the house of Zhao. If he had enough power, then Ye Ting wouldn't have been so willing to resolve this matter peacefully. Instead, he would have strode towards them with a heroic air to demand retribution from the Zhao. But with Zhao Xiluo returning to Gaoyi City with unbelievable strength and the Water School as his patron, the house of Ye was once more stuck in the underdog position. But with Zhao Xiluo being the one to make amends and offer up an apology and recompense for what damages the Zhao family had incurred, Ye Ting could be said to be placated. If Zhao Xiluo had desired to instead suppress the Ye, then even Ye Ting wouldn't be able to offer up any resistance.

Helpless, Ye Ting sighed to himself, "Sigh! Perhaps this was for the best! A mysterious ending to this mysterious conflict. But my Ye will feel wronged even with this end..."

"The Liu has the Wood, and the Zhao has the Water. Even the scions of the two houses are talented. Tianwen is strong, but compared to those two, he is nothing considerable. If only the Ye had such a mountain to rely upon...." By this point, Ye Ting's eyes had already flown to Bai Yunfei as if to measure him up. "A great deal of reason why Zhao Xiluo came to resolve this issue so peacefully is because of this Bai Yunfei. Just what sort of man is

this one? Even You Qingfeng of the Wood School looks favorably on him, if Zhao Xiluo's words can be trusted. And his sworn sister is in the Wood School as well, which sect has such an up-and-coming youth like him....?"

Not too long after the people from Zhao left, the Ye had been able to receive another rare guest. It was the lord of the Liu, Liu Kun. With him was his second son Liu Jin and his youngest son Liu Shun.

When Bai Yunfei saw Liu Shun, he couldn't detect a single scent of wine around him. Instead, Liu Shun had looked every single inch the part of being a regal scion to a wealthy house. It was almost as if he had never drank wine before and was thus sober into a hyper state of health to follow his father and brother without a word of complaint.

Liu Jin had the appearance of any average youth his age. He was slightly pudgy and wasn't a soul cultivator. But he was still a promising young man. Rumors had it that the business of the house of Liu was completely managed by his supervision, meaning that his trip to the Ye this time with his father was more than likely a business deal. Clearly, this was a sign of the Liu hoping to create friendly relations with the Ye.

When the Liu and Ye came together, Bai Yunfei had politely excused himself on pretext of needing to focus on building up his strength. He had no interest at all in what the two houses would say.

When Bai Yunfei had shown up, the look on Liu Kun's face became even more cordial. This had reaffirmed Ye Ting's thoughts on getting on Bai Yunfei's good side. He knew that today's events were practically pushed into the way Bai Yunfei had wanted—even if Bai Yunfei did nothing, the attitude between the Liu and the Zhao had changed drastically. It was clearly all because of how Bai Yunfei had been in his home and was willing to help his house.

After returning to his room, Bai Yunfei thought back to what had happened earlier today. Thinking about just how there were no more problems to be had with the Ye, Bai Yunfei's thoughts then wandered off to his fight with Zhao Xiluo.

Although there hadn't been an actual ending to the fight and was only a single exchange of soul skill between the two, Bai Yunfei had learned plenty from it. His strength previously had been extremely lacking and was unable to learn anymore from combat experience. But as a late-stage Soul Sprite, his understanding of the elements of the world was even better than before. He could feel the adept skill in which Zhao Xiluo had manipulated the elemental water, and it had been at a level of mastery far better than what Bai Yunfei could even attempt.

Soul Apprentices, Soul Personages, and Soul Warriors focused on increasing the physical strengths of their bodies. Soul Sprites, Soul Ancestors, and Soul Exalts were of the 'elemental realms'. They could absorb and the power of the elements in the world. To be more precise, they could 'borrow', 'control', and 'manipulate' the power of the elements. This was what Hong Yin had told him once before, but Bai Yunfei hadn't paid too much attention to it before. But now, he was starting understand it piece by piece.

In the following days, Ye Ting had hurried to consolidate his strength by fostering a good relationship with the Thunderbird. After the soul contract had been formed, the eyes of the Thunderbird grew more lively by the day as it gradually regained its sentience.

Bai Yunfei had desperately wanted Hong Yin to see what had happened here. He knew that Hong Yin would definitely want to find a way to free the enslaved soulbeast puppets that the Beast Taming School had possessed. There was no way for the two to contact one another, but Bai Yunfei was sure that they'd meet again in the future. In any case, nothing would happen to the Thunderbird as it lived with the Ye. When it was time, Bai Yunfei

would tell him.

Ye Quan and Ye Tianwen had already set about to restarting their businesses while Jing Mingfeng went out with Tianming for the day to roam around Gaoyi City. Bai Yunfei had decided to follow the two once before and had decided to do so no longer in the future. These two were clearly children at heart. They'd find fun in watching crickets making noise for half the day even. For that, Bai Yunfei had decided that it'd be better to go by himself—just as long as he didn't get lost.

Bai Yunfei paid a visit to the Zhao where he was warmly greeted and received. It had been an awkward experience, to say the least, for Bai Yunfei since just several days ago, Bai Yunfei had killed the caretaker for this house.

But after a series of talk, Zhao Xiluo had mentioned that there had been an agreement between Zhao Chuan and the Beast Taming School. The two sides had colluded under some sort of mysterious secret where even part of the businesses that the Zhao had were thrown in to sweeten the deal. Once Zhao Chuan had disappeared, the plot had been uncovered, and the Beast Taming School had no other choice but to flee. Bai Yunfei didn't know how this information came to be, but he didn't know whether it was true or not either.

Five days later, Bai Yunfei had decided to leave Gaoyi City to continue on with his travels.

That night, he was in the middle of looking over the things in his Space Ring when Ye Ting made a sudden visit. Speaking several words of courtesy, Ye Ting then handed a rather dilapidated book to Bai Yunfei.

"The house of Ye was able to overcome this time of crisis all thanks to lord Bai's assistance. I've heard Tianming say before that lord Bai had interest in the art of throwing daggers. I believe this item will serve some benefit to you then. Please take it as a way for

the house of Ye to express our thanks....”

Chapter 159: Fragments of the Flying Dagger

Instead of taking the old book right away, Bai Yunfei gave a questioning look towards Ye Ting, “What’s this?”

“I came across a fragment of this book about throwing knives by accident in the past. I took the time to study it of course, but I’m ashamed to say that it was far too incomprehensible to me. With no one in the house of Ye showing any interest in throwing knives and the fact that this is only a fragment of the book, I figured it was of no use. In truth, what is spoken in this fragment is still quite interesting. For a person of your talents and interest, lord Bai, I’m sure you’ll be able to understand far more than what I could from this book.”

Having explained the story behind the book, Ye Ting handed the book over to Bai Yunfei’s hand with a smile.

Upon taking the book into his own hands, Bai Yunfei began to flip through the several pages of it only to discover that more than a dozen pages had been torn away. Even the cover itself was a mess and the last two pages had only half its contents remaining. Many of the pictures depicted in the book itself had featured a strangely shaped throwing knife, and combined with the annotations around it, these pictures were clearly archiving information pertaining to the throwing knives.

There was nothing more to look at however, causing Bai Yunfei to store it away in his space ring. “Thank you very much, lord Ye.” He spoke.

“Please don’t be so polite, lord Bai.” Ye Ting waved his hand, “That thing is completely useless to me in neither money nor information. I can only hope that it’ll serve you some use.”

“Ah, Lord Bai, are you truly set on leaving Gaoyi City tomorrow?

Why not stay a little longer and see the sights? My child, Tianming, is very loathed to part with you....”

“Yes, I’m not too fond of staying in the same place too long. If there is a chance in the future, I’ll be back for a visit.”

“If that’s the case, I won’t try to change your mind...” Ye Ting relented before changing the topic into a more lighthearted conversation.

Ye Ting had left after several moments, allowing Bai Yunfei to continue preparing the items he would need for tomorrow. After all that was done and accounted for, Bai Yunfei took out the dilapidated book and begun to give a more indepth read.

“Secrets of the Throwing Knife: ‘Swift, Stealthy, and Accurate’. Everyone knows that, but for us soul cultivators, it is different. By learning the Soulguiding Knife, tossing a knife over three hundred meters would be as easy as swinging one’s arm!”

Flipping onto the first page, the ‘preface’ had caught Bai Yunfei’s eyes and left him gleeful. He had once thought of learning the Soulguiding Knife, but that had been nothing more than a dream. No matter how much he tried to in the past, each throwing knife he threw would always travel linearly without deviation. At most, he could throw them with great speed and power, but he had thought it naive to actually learn the Soulguiding Knife.

The meager words after the preface gave an overview of the actions needed to throw a knife, and at what angle it had to be thrown at. The most important guidelines had talked about just how the soulforce should be manipulated and fed into the throwing knives. But when it mentioned several meridian points of the arm, Bai Yunfei had been completely lost since he had never heard of some of them.

“To feed it soulforce means that the throwing knives have to be incomplete soul armament at the very least. But to use throwing knives at their best, they’d have to be soul armament. Just that

alone would make any soul cultivator flinch. But for me, that's no problem at all..."

Processing the information in his head, Bai Yunfei flipped to the next page.

On this page was a diagram of the meridian points on the arm with emphasis on the aforementioned points from the previous page.

The several diagrams after that had been relating to throwing knives. The concrete details and schematics several different knives could be seen alongside with several requisites. Many of the details had been downright specific to even what type of handle was best used in conjunction with feeding it soulforce from the meridian points.

There were several different throwing knives. There was a knife that could be recalled back the thrower, a knife that would let out a shrill whistle when thrown, a knife to cause an extreme bleeding effect when thrown, a knife that would travel a certain distance before turning into a completely different direction altogether, and so forth. Bai Yunfei had been dazzled to say the least at this wonder and clicked his tongue in admiration.

"How unexpected that there'd be so many different ways to use a throwing knife! Unique in both design and usage, the one who designed these throwing knives is a complete genius!" Bai Yunfei just had to sigh in admiration after reading the book. But then, a sigh of regret accompanied it, "How annoying that there's only a clear description on how to make it. The ways to control it are a little barebone, and even the methods that are labeled 'Minor counterstrike', or 'Stage Two Slant'--these have to be some sort of hand movement, but there isn't any more information...."

"Creating these knife require materials I don't have, and they don't look easy to get either! Primal stones of the highest quality and sixth-tier soul crystals? High quality primal stones are already

impossible, but sixth-tier soul crystals are something that only soulbeasts of the Soul Exalt level should have!”

“And even the designs of these knives are outrageous....but the even more outrageous thing is that I can actually read it! ‘Mechanics’....’wind resistance’.....’coefficient of friction’....what are those? Why can my mind somehow come up with some sort of guess and match the context of this blasted design? Even I don’t know how I know....”

Ye Ting said he tried to read this book before, but he had been unable to understand it. But for some reason, Bai Yunfei could somehow easily read and understand the more complicated parts. The reason behind this was naturally because of the broken fragments of his reincarnated self. He couldn’t concentrate on these fragmented memories, but he could still make out bits and pieces from the holes and reach this conclusion he had now.

After some consideration, Bai Yunfei had silently guessed that it was because of these memories and past experience to easily put aside these problems. Instead of being suspicious, he was happy to have benefited from it.

“If I can just find the other pages to this book, then I’ll be able to improve my strength with the art of the throwing knives. What a shame that it’s only a dream right now. I can’t force learn something like this....” Bai Yunfei thought with a heavy heart, but the fact he had this book had been a happy occasion. “No matter what, the information from the preface alone was a good harvest. I can learn the art of throwing knives bit by bit without concern for time. When I join the Crafting School, I’ll be able to learn how to forge items, even ones that can move by itself....”

On the second day, Bai Yunfei had packed away all his stuff and bid farewell to everyone. He had even walked over to where the Liu were and gave them a final goodbye before leaving Gaoyi City.

Jing Mingfeng himself had stayed back in Gaoyi City. Before the

two had split, Jing Mingfeng said that he would be traveling in a different direction, and thus, Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng were no longer companions on the road.

Over the course of the time they traveled with one another, Bai Yunfei and Jing Mingfeng grew to be very close friends. But even with all things considered, Bai Yunfei didn't want to roam around with Jing Mingfeng to see the world. He was a man on a mission to go towards the Crafting School, and Jing Mingfeng had his own path to walk. Even if they did travel together, they'd have to split up sooner or later. If there was destiny, then it would see fit that they meet each other again somehow.

Tianming had wanted to 'travel' with Bai Yunfei in truth. Yet, he knew that his own strength was lacking, so Bai Yunfei promised that if there was a chance, he would come back to see Tianming. Until then, Tianming had to steel his nerves and send Bai Yunfei off with a smile.

And so Bai Yunfei left Gaoyi City to once more return onto the journey towards the Crafting School.

Chapter 160: There Must Be Treasure In the Mysterious Cave!

The reason that Bai Yunfei had left Gaoyi City so quickly wasn't only because of the fear that he might be stuck there for some odd reason. He was also afraid that the Beast Taming School would come back for vengeance after being 'forced out' by Zhao Xiluo. If they came back and made a more in-depth examination of the place, who knows what might be found? Even though Bai Yunfei had completely destroyed any evidence, there was no telling what methods for information-finding they could use. In the case that his involvement was known, it would cause no small problems for him, that would be for certain.

Bai Yunfei had walked here and there, stopping every so often at the cities he'd come across on the way. With each city was a new sight and a new experience with their own people and culture to admire. And even though Bai Yunfei would sometimes come across some bandits that didn't know any better, they were hardly ever a problem. For someone like Bai Yunfei, stuff like this was merely something to look back on as nostalgic memories of his trip.

Whether it was a person filled with malice or a person in need of assistance, Bai Yunfei hadn't been miserly in how he dealt out the appropriate assistance. He was living the dreams of being a hero, and whenever the people he helped expressed their thanks to him, Bai Yunfei felt genuinely happy.

One thing worth mentioning was the fact that Bai Yunfei had managed to amass a considerable amount of +10 equipment after a period of constant upgrading. Naturally, the majority of the items were of the 'High-grade' while the minority were of the 'Superior-grade'. Already did Bai Yunfei plan to try and aim for another +12 or even +13 equipment when he had the time.

Roughly twenty-seven days after he left Gaoyi City.

In a boundless range of mountains where each of the peaks stabbed into the cloudy skies like spears, Bai Yunfei was presently staring down at an extremely foggy valley with confusion.

As one could clearly see, Bai Yunfei was lost.

On the twentieth day after his departure, Bai Yunfei had all but accepted the fact that he had some sort of condition for being a directionless person. After crossing so many mountains, valleys, and rivers, Bai Yunfei had accumulated some degree of experience. There should have been at least a sliver of progress—or so Bai Yunfei thought.

“Go screw yourself! What reason do you have to hide in the clouds today of all days?! It’s all your fault I can’t use the sun to guide my way now.” Bai Yunfei glared balefully at the moody weather above. Instead of blaming himself for his current predicament, he was pushing the blame onto the heavens themselves.

“If I’m lost, I’m lost then. Looks like rain in any case, should finding shelter should be the first priority. Wonder if I’ll be lucky enough to find a small village or something in the forests....” Bai Yunfei muttered as he observed his surroundings.

To the left, right, and even behind him was a verdant forest. In front of him was a huge mountain range. There was only just a small one hundred meter gap between the two mountains in front of him so that a single path could be seen leading into the valley. But even then it was a very precipitous descent that looked as if someone had previously cleaved one mountain into two.

“Should I go left, or should I go right? Or maybe should I just go straight into the valley?” Bai Yunfei thought to himself before taking a tentative step forward. As soon as he took that step forward, something out of the corner of his eyes caught his attention, causing him to look down at the base of the mountain walls. “Eh? That’s...”

A sudden gust blew through the area and drove away the foggy mist that pervaded the area, revealing a pitch-dark cave two hundred meters up above the ground and in the cliff walls.

“A cave! There’s a cave!” Bai Yunfei’s eyes sparkled with hope. Even his voice was filled with trepidation as he spoke, “A forest deep in the mountains, sheer cliffs, foggy valleys, and even a mysterious cave....”

“There has to be treasure in the cave.” Bai Yunfei rubbed at his chin with his right hand. “This cave looks naturally formed, not something that a mysterious white-bearded hermit would make out in the mountains. But what if it’s the burial grounds for some sort of master with plenty of precious treasure buried with him....Maybe a beast is protecting a worldly treasure? Who knows....”

Maybe Bai Yunfei had heard one too many strange tales on his journey. Or maybe it was for another reason. But Bai Yunfei had always surmised that there would be treasure in every cave he came across. Even now, he was still obstinate in the fact that ‘cave equals treasure’, so there was no way he’d give up this cave now.

“Thinking isn’t going to get me anywhere, time to take a look!” Bai Yunfei rushed towards the cave. Even with the rain coming down on him, Bai Yunfei was completely blind to the world around him so that he could run into the cave and explore it.

Bai Yunfei figured it’d be no problem at all to explore the cave seeing how close it was to him. Giving himself a hundred meters of space, he pushed off the ground with soulforce in his feet to run even faster. Each step he took had slammed into the ground to give him even more speed before he gave one final push to leap off from the ground to reach the cave above.

There was no way that Bai Yunfei was capable of reaching a height of a hundred meters with a single jump of course. At most, he was capable of twenty or thirty meters of height before falling

back down.

But not even ten meters in his descent, Bai Yunfei shook his right hand to bring out the Compliant Rope in its extended form. With a whip of his hand, the rope flew to wrap around a branch that was growing out from the cliff wall.

Tightening his right fist to make the rope grow taut, Bai Yunfei's descent was slowed down by a slight margin. But then a slight creaking sound was heard from the tree branch as it bent under Bai Yunfei's weight. Before it could break, Bai Yunfei had the rope shorten its length, and combined with the natural springing motion of the branch, Bai Yunfei was sent flying up.

With the wind streaming through his ears and the mist blowing into his eyes, Bai Yunfei was utterly ecstatic at the sensation. Unable to help himself, he shouted out, "Woooooooo.....ooooh—oh f*ck!"

The last outcry from Bai Yunfei was been due to the fact that Bai Yunfei was in danger of crashing into the cliff wall!

Holding firmly onto the Compliant Rope, Bai Yunfei twisted his body around at the last moment so that his back would impact against the wall.

"Bang!"

A muffled striking sound echoed through the silent valley along with parts of the cliff crumbling away. Half of Bai Yunfei's body had been stuck in the cliff wall, and although it didn't hurt him too badly, a pained grimace could be seen on his face. With a slight twist of his neck to pop the loose joints, Bai Yunfei sealed away the Compliant Rope back into the space ring and sat back in the crater he made on the cliff to enjoy the view down below.

"There's still a hundred meters to go." Estimating the distance, Bai Yunfei shook his right hand to search for items to increase his strength for the timebeing. And with the help of the Compliant

Rope for a second time, Bai Yunfei had finally reached the cave above.

It was about five meters tall in height and two meters wide in length. To Bai Yunfei's discovery, a slight wind was blowing from the interior of the cave to the outside with a quite refreshing sensation on the skin.

"This...this is the elemental wind!" Bai Yunfei realized with a jolt. The elemental wind around him was very noticeably richer in energy compared to the normal wind, and it seemed that the source of it was coming from within the cave itself.

"Really! What wonders have I stumbled across now!" Bai Yunfei brightened and walked into the cave rather impatiently.

But the very moment Bai Yunfei took a single step into the cave, there was a slight wriggling motion from the right side of the cave before an ashen whip-shaped object came flying out. The end was tapered off into a point with a slightly intimidating light, but even more frightening was that it was coming to stab him through the head!

Chapter 161: Greater Scorpion

But the very moment Bai Yunfei took a single step into the cave, there was a slight wriggling motion from the right side of the cave before an ashen whip-shaped object came flying out. The end was tapered off into a point with a slightly intimidating light, but even more frightening was that it was coming to stab him through the head!

“Haha, there’s even something like this!”

Rather than being startled, Bai Yunfei was overjoyed—if there was danger, there was treasure in this cave then!

It was true that Bai Yunfei was excited when he discovered the cave earlier. But even as he approached the cave, he had always maintained a wary attitude in case his expectations were not met. Since this was a cave with treasure in a ‘mysterious’ place, there would be no way that it would be safe for any one person to approach.

And as you could tell, here comes an enemy.

The attack had been sudden, but Bai Yunfei had only needed a half-step at the last moment to sidestep the whip-like object. As a result, the object grazed past his head and slammed into the ground with a cracking sound to scatter away stones upon impact. There was a shrill cry from his right side, causing Bai Yunfei to move towards the left to strictly avoid the right wall. Stopping just barely a meter away from the left wall, he whirled around to see just what had attacked him.

“Soulbeast!”

Upon seeing his attacker, Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but cry out in alarm. Right in front of him was a giant jet-black scorpion standing guard at the cave entrance. It was about two meters long and had a stinger that was practically tall enough to touch the ceiling. What

had attacked Bai Yunfei had been this very stinger. Two giant pincers were raised menacingly in the air with a “cling cling” sound as they clacked together. Each time the pincers clacked together, several sparks could be seen and illuminated three separate chicken egg-sized eyes that gave a death glare at its intruder.

“Fifth-tier...early-stage fifth-tier soulbeast!” Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows knitted together. From the body of this scorpion, he could sense a strength comparable to the Thunderbird, this was an early-stage fifth class soulbeast!

“So there’s a soulbeast like that here too! And a fifth-tier boot!” Bai Yunfei cried out to himself in shock. While it was untrue that he didn’t come across any soulbeasts in his travels, Bai Yunfei had only met a meager few third-tier soulbeasts. But not once had he met a soulbeast like this.

“A treasure that even a fifth-tier soulbeast would protect....what kind of worldly treasure would this be....” Bai Yunfei remarked to himself. He had been elated since a worldly treasure would almost always have a strange beast protecting it. These beast had probably borrowed the strange nature of the area to grow even stronger, or perhaps they had waited for when one of the hidden treasures to fully mature before devouring it to grow in strength.

There were simply far too many soulbeasts that gained a huge boost in power from eating a worldly treasure. Unlike humans, they had a natural advantage that allowed them to eat what could possibly harm or kill a human that tried to eat something similar. Poison to humans was but a tonic to a soulbeast.

And if there was a strong soulbeast standing guard in an area, there was a very good chance such a treasure was hidden somewhere nearby. These soulbeasts would regard such items as objects belonging to them in their territory. Any single biological being that intruded in this territory would suffer a quick assault by them.

For a brief moment, Bai Yunfei's caution was raised to the maximum. It was only after he spread his soulsense that he realized there was only a single soulbeast here. Relaxing by a small margin, Bai Yunfei looked to the already charging scorpion and brought his fists together in a happy salute. "An early-stage fifth-tier soulbeast is a Soul Ancestor in the eyes of a human. Hehe, what luck! Allow me to use you to test my strength!"

"Skreee!"

The scorpion let out a shrill cry as if it realized what Bai Yunfei was preparing to do. Now noticing that the intruder in its territory wasn't as strong as it was, the scorpion had been all too happy to unleash its attack.

Both of its strong pincers flew forward to cut down Bai Yunfei in its powerful vicegrip. But instead of hitting Bai Yunfei, it had instead struck against the ground. Because of the claws acting like a fulcrum, the upper body of the scorpion was pitched into the air while allowing its long stinger tail to soar forward Bai Yunfei like a spear ready to run him through.

The cave both soulbeast and human was in was not big at all. There wasn't nearly enough room to dodge by a safe margin. Squinting his eyes to stare down the incoming stinger, Bai Yunfei's feet began to let loose a dazzling light underneath before his body abruptly flickered away. Even though the stinger was fast in its movements, not a single one of its stabs had managed to land a hit on Bai Yunfei at all.

As Bai Yunfei calmly weaved in and out of the stingers, he was on the look out for the right time to strike back. Another stinger streaked past his ear with a gentle crackling sound, but as it moved about a third of a meter away from Bai Yunfei, the tip of the stinger gave a slight shake before it bent at an angle to strike at Bai Yunfei's back.

With the danger of the stinger attacking him from behind, Bai

Yunfei's right arm moved to block the stinger. Simultaneously, his feet pushed off against the ground to propel him to the left. Successful in his evasion attempt, Bai Yunfei had managed to make it so that instead of his back, the stinger struck his right waist. Straight away, the sounds of fabric being torn could be heard along with the bright illumination of sparks. Following the sparks, Bai Yunfei could feel his Goldsilk Armor gaining a long gash in it.

At this slight sound, Bai Yunfei let out a small gasp. Just as he was about to take advantage of the opportunity to strike, Bai Yunfei immediately sensed another danger wash over him on the very next step. Startled, Bai Yunfei made no hesitation to leap back for a tactical retreat.

“Skreee!”

The scorpion let out another shrill sound as the two pincers in the ground suddenly started to glow bright with a yellow light before being transmitted instantaneously into the ground. And in the next second, Bai Yunfei could feel the earth beneath him shake furiously as several sharp stalagmites erupted from the ground. If Bai Yunfei had not trusted his instincts and leapt back, then not only would his feet and legs be punctured, his ass would be too.

“Screw you, how fucked is this!”

Thumping himself in the chest to drive away the lingering fear in him, Bai Yunfei shook his right hand to bring out three daggers. With one dagger for each of the scorpion's eyes, Bai Yunfei tossed them with as much strength he could muster while running at it.

The scorpion brought out its large pincers to protect its body. With barely any effort, the daggers were blocked and allowed the scorpion to swing its pincer to try and cut off Bai Yunfei's left leg. Once more, the scorpion tried to impale Bai Yunfei in the stomach with its stinger.

A brilliant gleam entered Bai Yunfei's eyes as his body moved to bend towards the ground. The stinger had failed to strike Bai

Yunfei in the stomach and instead arced over his spine. But while he dodged the stinger, the scorpion's giant pincer shot forth towards his left leg. But instead of trying to evade it, Bai Yunfei stretched out with his right arm as if to receive and greet the pincer.

A very human-like emotion of shock registered in all three eyes of the scorpion. In its mind, it thought to itself "This human is a reckless one if it dares enter my pincers. Then. I'll snap him in two and use his remains as fertilizer."

"Crack...."

The pincer came snapping shut with a sharp chafing sound—much to the surprise of the scorpion. Bai Yunfei's arm had been completely unharmed!

Incredulous, the scorpion's entire body flashed with a golden light while twisting the pincer that held Bai Yunfei's arm with increased force.

But! The Flame-edge Bracer's ultimate defense was not something that could be so easily broken!

Pleased, Bai Yunfei clenched his right fist tightly so as to increase the density of his muscles in that arm. With his right leg pushing a single inch into the ground, Bai Yunfei immediately let loose with as much power as he could muster in his right arm whilst it was in the grasp of the scorpion's vicegrip.

The enormous body of the scorpion was lifted into the air, and with Bai Yunfei's momentum, the body was smashed ruthlessly into the cave wall to its left!

"Bang!"

A crater was formed upon collision with the stone wall. The entire back of the scorpion had been submerged into the cave wall, and the pincer that had been holding Bai Yunfei's right arm tightly just a moment ago loosened its grip, allowing Bai Yunfei yet

another chance to strike. Without mercy, he slammed a fist into the unprotected flesh of the underbelly of the scorpion.

“Pow!”

“Pchht!”

At the same time Bai Yunfei’s right arm slammed into the scorpion’s underbelly and drove it even deeper into the wall, the jaws of the scorpion dropped open to unleash a dark green blob of liquid towards Bai Yunfei!

Chapter 162: Mutual Destruction

The jaws to the scorpion opened wide before a glob of green liquid came splurting out towards Bai Yunfei's face!

"Fuck, you're spitting on me now?!"

Disgusted, Bai Yunfei twisted his foot so that he'd be pushed off to the side. The 'spit' from the scorpion fell to the ground with a sizzling sound, and an acrid smell came floating up shortly afterwards.

The pupils in Bai Yunfei's contracted just slightly as he looked at the ground. Then looking back to the scorpion, Bai Yunfei was now giving a more careful evaluation of the beast.

For a while, man stared off against scorpion. Then, there was a loud cry from the scorpion. An orange glow exploded forth from its body towards Bai Yunfei, and with both of its large pincers, it slammed down into the ground so that several large stalagmites shot up to skewer Bai Yunfei.

"Hah! This move again?" Bai Yunfei snorted derisively. Instead of leaping left or right, he instead hopped up into the air and onto roof of the cave. As he flew overhead, Bai Yunfei twisted his body so that his feet landed onto the roof and his head was hung beneath. Pushing off, Bai Yunfei flew off with great speeds towards the scorpion.

As he approached, Bai Yunfei twisted his body so that he'd dodge the incoming stinger. On his descent, he brought back his right fist and slammed it down onto the scorpion.

"Bang!"

Stone and rubble flew everywhere following the crater that came with Bai Yunfei's fist. Not even before he could even react, a shadow had loomed overhead due to the scorpion's pincer lashing down on him!

He was shocked. The scorpion's stinger had been as fast as an arrow—a speed he couldn't dodge. All that was left for him to do was to bring up both arms to hopefully block it with his right arm.

There was a clanging sound before Bai Yunfei's waist bent slightly and his feet sunk two inches deeper into the ground. Grunting just ever so lightly, Bai Yunfei slowly managed to push the stinger above his arms upwards. Just as he was about to seize the chance to strike back, an ashen shadow came flying at his side out of nowhere!

“Pa-pow!”

Bai Yunfei was truck flying to the other cave wall with a resounding smash. And just like the scorpion, he had created a hole of his own to be stuck in.

Red from the blood coursing into his face and out from his mouth, Bai Yunfei chuckled before wiping his lips clean of his blood. “Hehe, not bad! You’re hiding your strength! That’s the speed and strength that I expected from a Fifth-tier Soulbeast....”

“Skreee!”

The scorpion let loose two loud cries as if pleased by this ‘tit for tat’ exchange. Not even bothering to continue its assault, the scorpion instead lifted its stinger up to point at Bai Yunfei menacingly.

“Eh?”

Distracted by this motion, Bai Yunfei looked questioningly at it. At the very tip of the stinger, it looked as if the black tip was opening up like an actual beak. From within, a dark green shade of liquid was then jettisoned towards Bai Yunfei with great speed!

“Oh fuck! It had something like that too!”

As Bai Yunfei paled in fright and bent his waist to dodge, another shot came flying at him again.

“You’re fucking with me, rapid fire?!”

Cursing out loud, Bai Yunfei activated the Wave Treading Steps to move left and right to dodge this ‘bullet storm’.

The barrage had continued on for a whole minute before Bai Yunfei felt himself haggard and exhausted. The entire wall behind him was riddled with holes as if it were cheese, and if not for the Wave Treading Steps, Bai Yunfei would have been poisoned to death.

Clearly the scorpion did not think that Bai Yunfei was capable of such a speed either. It had been exceedingly proud in this one venomous barrage, but to see that not a single one of it land on its prey had caused it to pause. When the scorpion stabbed both of its pincers into the ground, Bai Yunfei prepared himself to defend. But! Instead of attacking, the scorpion instead disappeared beneath the ground right in front of his eyes.

“Wha—”

Bai Yunfei had been slightly astonished to see the scorpion escape underground. Yet, when he thought about how the scorpion had initially appeared from the walls to begin with, his eyes narrowed together. Concentrated, Bai Yunfei raised his right hand up to retrieve his Fire-tipped Spear and released his soulsense to survey the surrounding area.

Roughly a minute of unsettling silence passed before something caught Bai Yunfei out of the corner of his eye. With a lash of his spear, he stabbed it straight into the ground a meter in front of him, “Here you are!”

“Pcht!”

The Fire-tipped Spear didn’t sink into the ground, but it didn’t make any reaction either.

A flash of light danced across Bai Yunfei’s eyes as he gripped tightly onto the spear. Taking half a step forward, he brought his

spear back up from the ground and then around to stab right behind him at the cave wall.

“Boom!”

This time, the explosive effect of the Fire-tipped Spear had been activated. Because it had conveniently struck near the cave entrance, a great deal of the stone structure that collapsed in on itself. With such a strong blast of elemental fire escaping from the fallout of the blast, even the mist nearby the cave entrance had been evaporated.

Almost simultaneously, there was a frightened ‘skree’ following the explosion. The cave shook once. And in the next second, the scorpion reappeared once more!

“Hehe, you can’t escape now!”

A pleased smile crept onto Bai Yunfei’s face. It was by no means an accident that he missed the scorpion with this spear strike. If he struck the scorpion, then it wouldn’t be as unharmed as it was now—in fact, it stood a good chance at dying from that. But Bai Yunfei wasn’t here to kill the scorpion. He just wanted the treasure and not the life of a soulbeast.

Even as he smiled, Bai Yunfei’s next motions were done with the utmost fluidity and grace. With one shake of his hand, the spear disappeared, and in the next shake, a bright-red brick appeared in its place.

And so Bai Yunfei danced and weaved through the rather frantic globs of poison the scorpion threw out with its stinger. But with a second ground to roof kick action, Bai Yunfei was able to kick off and land right next to the scorpion to deliver a stunning strike onto the scorpion’s head.

The scorpion didn’t know just why this human wasn’t using its terrifying boom stick anymore, but the red stone that the human held in its hand wasn’t something that the scorpion would take

any less serious either. Unable to hold back any more, it rose a pincer to block against the brick while bringing out its stinger to sweep Bai Yunfei off his feet.

“Bang!”

The brick made contact with the scorpion’s pincer. While the scorpion itself was unharmed, its entire body was suddenly sent flying by some sort of mysterious power! Because of this power, the tail of the beast had failed to hit Bai Yunfei before following its master out of the cave!

Spinning enough for two revolutions, the scorpion could see that its flight was en-route through the cave entrance. Completely unexpected by Bai Yunfei, the scorpion’s stinger pierced down onto the ground while its other half latched onto the very last edge of the outside to the cave. But even then, the scorpion was in a precarious situation with no room to back up.

“Time for you to go down!”

Before it could even plan its next attack, another one of Bai Yunfei’s foot slammed into its abdomen! During its flight, Bai Yunfei had somehow managed to close the distance and seize a chance to sneak in another attack!

The power within this one kick had not been negligible by any means and had managed to kick away even the scorpion’s stinger. This time, the scorpion was sent flying over the edge of the cave and down towards the valley beneath with wide-open eyes.

But to add insult to injury, Bai Yunfei stamped another foot down onto it so that the scorpion would be sent flying down at an increased speed! But while he prepared himself to jump back up onto the cave, a sudden constricting sensation could be felt around his leg! There was a heavy yank, and in the next second, the scorpion’s tail grabbed onto Bai Yunfei’s leg so that the two of them would fall to the ground together!

Chapter 163: You Rascal!

With Bai Yunfei's right leg intertwined with the scorpion's tail, both human and beast tumbled to the ground with one another.

Even as the wind coursing through his ears, Bai Yunfei tried his best to kick at the stinger with his left leg in annoyance. When there was no change, he cried out, "For fucks sakes, get your ha—wait—get your tail off me!"

His kicks did nothing to the scorpion however. The more he kicked, the closer the ground was coming up to the two of them. An annoyed glare crept up into Bai Yunfei's eyes before a crimson-red light burst forth from his entire body before concentrating around his right arm. There was a slight tearing sound when a burst of fire ripped through his clothes and materialized as a two meter long blade around his very person.

The Flame Winged Blade!

"If you don't let go, I'll cut off your tail!" Bai Yunfei declared.

The Flame Winged Blade swelled yet another half meter as if to responding to Bai Yunfei's declaration. The mist that was previously around the two combatants evaporated almost instantly, forming a clear open space.

"Skree!"

Following the screeching sound of the scorpion, its tail immediately relinquished its hold on Bai Yunfei's right hand and decreased in length size. It seemed truly afraid of Bai Yunfei's threat to cut off its tail.

"How obedient you are!"

Bai Yunfei was overjoyed. Waving his right arm, the blade of fire dissipated away into thin air. With another shake of his hand, the Compliant Rope flew out and coiled around a protruding cliffstone overhead.

He slammed against the cliff wall, as courtesy to the physics that caused the sudden stop in his descent. Massaging the aching right shoulder of his, Bai Yunfei then looked down to where the scorpion was and sighed in relief from what he saw.

The valley below was without a doubt a very deep one, but Bai Yunfei didn't doubt that the scorpion would survive such a fall. A fifth-tier soulbeast would not die so easily to something like falling. He knew that this soulbeast in particular was slightly weaker than he thought, but it wasn't a thought he was too inclined to think about. He only just wanted some time so that he'd be able to take the treasure in the cave.

Bai Yunfei circulated the soulforce in him so that the rope shortened in length and allow him to fly upwards. As he traveled up, Bai Yunfei smiled gleefully at the prospects of the treasure that'd be waiting for him.

"Has to be something strong, or maybe a high-grade primal stone. Or maybe a millennial spirit fruit? Or maybe its..."

"Bzzzz."

The sudden droning sound from down below caused Bai Yunfei to look down instinctively. But the sight that greeted his eyes had nearly been shocking enough for him to release his grip on the rope!

"Wha—what the fuck! You rascal! What kind of scorpion can fly? Do you identify as a dragonfly or something!?"

The half-second loss of composure had led to Bai Yunfei crying out loud in a flustered voice.

Just several hundred meters beneath him, the scorpion that Bai Yunfei thought was plummeting downwards was already on its way back up. On its back were a pair of transparent wings that beat so rapidly that it created the buzzing sounds from earlier. All three of its beady little eyes stared at Bai Yunfei as if to say, "Amazed? I

can fly!"

Not once did Bai Yunfei ever notice the hidden pair of wings on its back during their fight!

Moreover, there was a slight azure halo around it that pulsated with the power of the elemental wind.

"A duality of wind and earth!"

Bai Yunfei blurted out.

It was no wonder that he felt that this scorpion leaned towards the weaker side of the power spectrum. It wasn't an ardent practitioner of the elemental earth, it also practiced the elemental wind! On one hand, this meant that the scorpion wouldn't be able to fight an early-stage Soul Ancestor to a stalemate, but it could fight equally well on both land and air!

For example, this scorpion was flying rapidly towards Bai Yunfei right now while he could only hang pitifully on the cliff wall.

From the screeching sound of the scorpion, Bai Yunfei could tell that it was both angry and pleased. The humiliation and pain that it had suffered at the hands of this hateful human; he would return the favor twofold! "Let's see how you'll fight now in midair!" It was practically shouting.

There was a burst of azure light before three blades of wind materialized from the air and shot straight for Bai Yunfei.

Cursing himself for his lack of wings, Bai Yunfei kicked off from the cliff wall so that he'd swing upwards. Combined with the Compliant Rope that was helping him climb upwards, Bai Yunfei managed to just barely dodge the three blades of wind. If he could just get back into the cave, Bai Yunfei wouldn't need to fear the scorpion any longer.

Following another blade of wind, the scorpion's wings began to beat even faster so that it could fly straight for the Compliant Rope.

“There’s no time!”

It would only take fifty meters and another chance with the Compliant Rope for Bai Yunfei to reach the cave, but there was no time for that anymore. As loathe as he was to consider it, Bai Yunfei gave up the original plan. With all things considered, the scorpion stood a mere ten meters beneath him with a screeching sound that sounded a little too....ecstatic.

“Fuck! Can you please at least try not to be so crass?”

Consternated, Bai Yunfei tried to hide his anger and kicked off the cliff wall. This time, instead of escaping upwards, he instead kicked out to fly towards the valley itself!

This kick-off had been so strong that he flew practically twenty meters away from the cliff and past the scorpion. But then the gravity of the world soon forced him to fall back down to the earth shortly afterwards.

The scorpion hadn’t expected this course of action, after all. Leaping away from the cliff only meant there was no longer any foothold to grab hold onto. With his body in the air and unable to fly, how could Bai Yunfei possibly do anything else?

By the time the scorpion fully registered what Bai Yunfei had done, he had already fallen ten meters to the valley. A schadenfreudic light had appeared on the scorpion’s eyes as if gleefully expecting the death of the human. But as it was considering just when Bai Yunfei would fall to his death, a golden rope appeared out of nowhere and flew past its head to grab onto its tail. One end was wrapped painfully around its stinger, and the other end was held tightly in the hands of the blasted human it was looking at!

“Hehe, caught you!” Bai Yunfei roared in happiness. Pulling with his right arm with all his might, the scorpion’s position in the air was immediately destabilized. Its entire body shook violently as the beast tried to stabilize itself. In its panic however, the scorpion

suddenly realized that all of a sudden, its back became heavier.

And then there was a eerily happy laughter.

Whilst the scorpion was trying to stabilize itself, Bai Yunfei took advantage of the distraction to swing onto the scorpion's back. With another tug of the rope, the Compliant Rope then coiled around the two pincers of the beast with a powerful tightening force.

“Skree!”

A frantic screech came forth from the scorpion's mouth. With both its tail and pincer tightly bound together by the golden rope, it had no way of escape from Bai Yunfei now!

Shaking left and right in an attempt to throw Bai Yunfei off, the scorpion tried its best to get away from the human. But, would Bai Yunfei really let the beast do as it pleased? Holding onto the rope ever so tightly, Bai Yunfei stuck to the scorpion's back and forced the scorpion from doing anything more.

For this one moment, Bai Yunfei was akin to a knight riding his horse. But while the scorpion flew through the air, neither of the two had realized that they were flying for the forests away from the valley. There was an abrupt “pop” sound, and then the two of them began to careen down towards it.

“Pow!”

Crashing through layers and layers of the trees, the scorpion soon came to a rest in a scorpion-shaped crater on the ground below. In the very last second, Bai Yunfei managed to jump away from the scorpion and evade the most of the damages he would have otherwise sustained. He was in a sorry state, but a pleased smile was still on his face.

With the combined efforts of his brick and fist, the mighty fifth-tier Soulbeast scorpion was knocked out and left in its sorry state right afterwards.

Several minutes were required before Bai Yunfei managed to then climb back up to the ravaged cave again. Expectantly, he walked into the cave.

Just what treasures would be held in this here cave?

Chapter 164: As the Mantis Hunts the Cicada, the Oriole Stalks the Mantis

“For....for fucks sakes!”

In this quaint valley area, an exasperated but frustrated roar called out from a cave on the walls. Echoing for a good while, the roar soon petered away.

It was a mystery just when this saying became a personal mantra as Bai Yunfei had at one point found himself repeating this line again and again. Perhaps it was by saying this one line he would be able to let loose all of his frustrations and anger.

“Where’s my treasure!?”

His eyes swept across the landscape in a desperate attempt to find the hidden treasure that he so desperately coveted. Already did Bai Yunfei reach the dead ends of the cave, and there was nothing to be seen behind the vegetation and any loose stone throughout the cave.

“No no no! This can’t be happening....” Bai Yunfei muttered despondently. For a while, he was vexed. But in the next second, his eyes lit up enthusiastically as if a new thought came to rekindle his hopes. “Oh right! Underground! It has to be hidden in the ground!”

Burning bright with this sliver of hope, Bai Yunfei retrieved a shovel and began to dig at the ground.

Only five minutes were needed with Bai Yunfei’s speed before his shovels hit rock-bottom. Not even a small pit-core of a fruit could be seen, let alone any hidden treasure, however....

“There’s...there’s really nothing...” Not only did Bai Yunfei fall down to the ground, his heart sank with him. “I’ve wasted so much time and energy to fight that fifth-tier soulbeast. But for what use?! Why has it come to this! It just can’t be....was my instincts

wrong? I could have sworn....”

“Eh? Hold on...” Out of the corners of his eyes, Bai Yunfei saw a spot of dirt that was out of place. He didn’t touch this part of the dirt yet.

He squatted down to inspect the patch of dirt. At a closer look, signs of some sort of plant was grown here. Just barely, Bai Yunfei could see a small part of what seemed to be the stolon of a plant and...

“Elemental wind!”

Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up with joy. In this little spot of dirt was a small bit of elemental wind from whatever plant that was plucked here!”

“And this must be....footprints!” Looking around, Bai Yunfei saw another footprint on the ground, but it wasn’t his!

Several seconds were taken for Bai Yunfei to think. But then a sudden thought caused him to fly to his feet with a pale face.

It was said that when the mantis hunts the cicada, they become unaware of the oriole standing behind it.

He was that mantis!

Unfortunately for him, Bai Yunfei was the foolish middleman. It was very clear to see that in the time that Bai Yunfei was dealing with the scorpion, someone else took the chance to come in the cave first!

“Careless, I was too careless! I was so focused on fighting the scorpion that another person came in to take the treasure! But he can’t be weak if he managed to do all that before I got back....fuck him! Just fuck it all! He better not let me find him or else!”

He was angry, but even he knew there was no point to his anger. At the very least, he’d be able to vent out his anger instead of holding it up in him.

“Skree!”

At that moment, a furious screech erupted from the cave entrance. In the next second, a furious scorpion came rushing in! Whilst Bai Yunfei was so busy mumbling to himself, he forgot to keep an eye out for enemies!

The scorpion came to a stop five meters away from Bai Yunfei so that it could sweep its three eyes frantically around the place. First, it spotted the hole next to Bai Yunfei.

Then it spotted the spade in his hands.

“Oh—wait! It’s not what you think....” With his heart skipping a beat, Bai Yunfei hastily stored away his spade and waved his hands in the gesture for innocence. “It wasn’t me! What I was looking for was already gone! Someone else came in while we weren’t here. Maybe you’ll be able to catch up to them if you go now!”

“Pfft!”

The scorpion took a single step back before spitting out a glob of dark-green liquid.

“....Big brother, I don’t know what you lost, but it doesn’t warrant you spitting blood out right?”

This blob of liquid wasn’t aimed at Bai Yunfei, but the ground in front of him as if an actual reenactment of someone puking blood from anger.

So it came as a surprise to see the scorpion raise its head with all three of its eyes transfixed onto Bai Yunfei. Not only was it angry, but each of its three eyes had a tint of insanity to them almost. A bluish-green energy soon pervaded the entire room before condensing into a furious whirlwind. With the centripetal attraction force, the green liquid that the scorpion threw up earlier flew towards the whirlwind and immediately dyed the entire thing a dark-green hue. Tearing up the cave rock underneath it, the whirlwind stalked towards Bai Yunfei.

“Fuck!” Bai Yunfei cursed to himself. With a deep breath, he ran straight for the cave entrance.

The poisonous liquid that the scorpion spat out was already close to vapor form as it spread throughout the cave. By now, it had already covered the entire cave with its vapor. All that was left for Bai Yunfei to do was to try his best to sidestep the whirlwind itself towards the entrance without taking in another breath.

“Skree!”

Another roar from the scorpion cleared away the whirlwind. Following up with a burst of orange light, the scorpion’s pincer slammed into the ground to transmit the powers of the elemental earth into it.

This one stab held far more power than any previous attempt, and just three meters before Bai Yunfei reached the entrance, he could feel that all around his feet, the ground was starting to vibrate. Left and right, orange-colored spikes erupted from the ground to try and surround or stab him!

“Crack!” Following the cracking sounds of the stalagmites forming, Bai Yunfei’s figure was surrounded by these spikes.

A lot more carefree than before, the scorpion strode for the caged formation it put up. But as it approached, a bright red light flashed out from the cracks between the stalagmites!

And with a loud explosion, the stalagmites crumbled away to reveal a blade of fire around Bai Yunfei.

Once more pushing off against the ground, Bai Yunfei charged for the cave entrance. He was already very depressed about the current matters. The scorpion after him had fallen into the pits of indignation and would most likely kill itself in an attempt to retrieve the treasure it was safeguarding and kill the one responsible

He had been used as a scapegoat!

Since there was no more need to fight, Bai Yunfei was far more willing to forego the effort.

But at the entrance, Bai Yunfei felt slightly troubled. Should he go up, or should he go down?

There were two hundred meters to go if he went up. But the scorpion could fly after him and the use of the Compliant Rope to travel up was rather hard to do so under the circumstances. If he went downwards, it was unsure just how long he could last before reaching the valley.

The six blades of wind coming at him from behind gave Bai Yunfei no time to think however. Gritting his teeth, Bai Yunfei leapt down. “Forget it! Wasting my energy on dodging is better than wasting it on climbing! Down we go!”

With the combined efforts of gravity and pushing off against the cliff walls, Bai Yunfei was able to accelerate towards the ground. Of course, he couldn’t just focus on speeding down towards the ground. Every so often, Bai Yunfei used the Compliant Rope to decelerate himself to manageable speeds and to dodge the attacks of the scorpion whenever it came.

Teeming with rage, the scorpion continued to chase Bai Yunfei without fail. As it drew closer to Bai Yunfei, the blades of wind and the poison it shot out rained down onto him with a furious tempo.

Chapter 165: Save Me!

“Big brother! Are you finished yet?! I’ve said it wasn’t me!” The howls of Bai Yunfei reverberated throughout the forests.

Twenty minutes passed since the chase started. The two of them had already arrived in the valley and blazed into the forest for several more minutes, but that only showed how hellbent the scorpion was on chasing Bai Yunfei.

“Fucking hell! If you keep chasing me, then I’ll start to get really angry!” He had had enough. Swapping out for several strength-increasing accessories, Bai Yunfei swapped from escape mode into battle mode. The continuous chase from start to finish only served to anger him—he wasn’t some sort of person you could slap this way and that without resistance!

Hopping over at treetop, Bai Yunfei prepared to whirl around to retaliate when suddenly; a stinging pain spiked through his head. Following that sting, Bai Yunfei felt his legs grow weak as if threatening to fall down from the tree he was on.

“Wha—sh*t! I’m poisoned!” Bai Yunfei screamed silently to himself when he realized the reason for his predicament. That poison he thought he managed to escape from back in the cave, it finally started to show its true effects now!

“Skreee!”

The scorpion had been waiting for this moment for a very long time now. Two blades of wind materialized straight away to slam into Bai Yunfei before he could move. Struggling as hard as he could, Bai Yunfei barely managed to dodge the wind so that they instead slammed into the tree branch he was on. But with his footing gone, Bai Yunfei soon fell to the ground afterwards.

Unwilling to give him the chance to respond, the two wings on its back started to beat rapidly. With a swing of its tail, the stinger

flew straight for Bai Yunfei as if it was a bat ready to strike into a ball.

Another pleased cry erupted from the scorpion when Bai Yunfei flew off into the nearby grove after a successful strike. Just as it prepared itself to give chase, a sudden splashing sound entered its ears. Something fell into the water.

Dazed by this unexpected sound, the scorpion hurried after Bai Yunfei only to realize that its prey had fallen off over a precipice to splash into the river underneath it. By the time the scorpion reached the precipice, Bai Yunfei had already been rushed away by the river and away from the scorpion.

He's trying to escape by using the river!

This was what the scorpion thought.

But the next words that came out from Bai Yunfei's mouth nearly forced the scorpion to fall out from the sky.

"Save me! I can't swimmm!"

"....."

Watching Bai Yunfei be swept away by the stream, the scorpion could only really stand there in silent shock. With a screeching sound, it turned away and left.

For a mid-stage Soul Sprite, being dropped into the water wasn't really a danger, even if they couldn't swim. And being poisoned so that they weren't able to move their bodies as efficiently wouldn't be life-threatening either.

But if both conditions were to be met, then there was another story to be told altogether.

Bai Yunfei felt so sour that he wanted to die almost. It took an extraordinarily large amount of strength to take down the scorpion, but then the treasure had been taken by someone else! Then he was taken down from the stage just like that after such a

hard attempt to escape—if he knew about this beforehand, Bai Yunfei would've utterly crippled the scorpion.

It was too late for such thoughts however. Several mouthfuls of water and leaves had already been swallowed before Bai Yunfei could take advantage of a brief moment of clarity to circulate his soulforce into his limbs to try and find something to grab onto. It was to his glee that a sturdy tree branch could be felt. It wasn't enough to stay afloat on, but it'd be enough to give him enough time to flush out the poison in his system and escape from the river.

The sounds of water crashing down over itself knocked Bai Yunfei's plan out of the water however. The sight that greeted his eyes when he lifted his head forced all of the blood in his face to drain away. “Fuck!!!!” He cried out in agony. “Why do I have such bad luck!?”

Just several hundred meters ahead of him was a tremendous waterfall!

His head looked up towards the sky to mutter a quick prayer, “Dear god, I was wrong! I shouldn't have blamed you for my sense of direction! But...do you really have to screw with me like this....”

The closer and closer he got to the edge of the waterfall, the more frantic Bai Yunfei got. Trying as hard as he could to devise of a way to save his life, the splashing sound of something else falling into the water caught his attention. Turning his head, he could see the scrawny figure of a person swimming towards him like a fish.

Joy seized Bai Yunfei’s heart. There was a person to save him! Flailing around with all his strength, Bai Yunfei tried to reach the other person.

This new person had quite the swimming ability. In just a mere ten seconds, he reached where Bai Yunfei was and grabbed onto his arm before turning around to swim to shore.

With just a hundred meters to go before the point of no return, Bai Yunfei had been saved. Beating his chest as hard as he could to expel the water in him, Bai Yunfei tilted his head weakly towards his savior.

What greeted his eyes was a dark-skinned, long-haired young male around his age. Draped in a simple cotton robe, a single rattan rope was tied from a nearby tree trunk to his waist.

“Th-cough-thank you. I’d be in deep waters if not for you.” Bai Yunfei coughed out his thanks to his savior.

“Haha, don’t mention it, I was just passing by. It’s only natural to help someone in need. How’d you fall in the water?” The youngster cracked a smile as he wrung water from his clothes.

“I er....careless, you know....just being careless....” Bai Yunfei laughed awkwardly.

Choosing not to pursue the question, the youngster stood up.
“I’m Shao Ling, what’s your name, big brother?”

“Bai Yunfei.”

“Gotcha. Why don’t we head back to my house and get you some dry clothes, you’ll fee—”

“Careful!”

In the midst of Shao Ling’s speech, Bai Yunfei let out a cry before diving towards Shao Ling to tackle him to the ground.

At the same time of his cry, a multicolored tiger erupted from the thickets to the left of Shao Ling. There was no premonition to its pounce other than the growl a split-second beforehand. Shao Ling had only enough time to turn his head to see the bloody jaws of the tiger come at him. The grisly stench of blood and gore was abundant in its smell. All the tiger needed to do was to clamp down with its jaws and Shao Ling would be a head short of a body.

White greeted his eyes. All it was he could do to just close his

eyes.

“Bang!”

A cracking sound greeted his ears following the painful growl of a tiger. Opening his eyes just a crack, he could see Bai Yunfei with his fist held back and the retreating figure of a tiger back into the forest.

“You okay there?”

Bai Yunfei asked with slight concern.

“Ah? Oh! Ye-yea, thank you brother Bai....”

“Haha, don’t worry about it, we’re even now!” Bai Yunfei waved his hand with a smile. He had been given enough time earlier to completely neutralize the poison so that movement wouldn’t be a challenge.

For several minutes, Shao Ling stared wide-eyed at Bai Yunfei in silence. “Big brother Bai....you...you beat off that tiger? But...even that’s a little to—”

“A little too what? I’ve learned how to fight, fighting a wild beast like that isn’t a problem.” Bai Yunfei shrugged it off with a smile. Looking at the thicket, he continued to say, “Aren’t we going back to your home? Let’s go then. I’ve used up a lot of energy today, I need a rest!”

“O-ooh. Got it, we’ll go now then. Big brother Bai, this way....”

As Shao Ling led Bai Yunfei back to his village, another unforeseen event was currently happening in the middle of the valley....

Chapter 166: The Oriole Shows Itself!

As Shao Ling led Bai Yunfei back to his village, another unforeseen event was currently happening in the middle of the valley....

“Skree!!”

Back in the original cave, the mournful sounds of a scorpion in despair could be heard throughout the passageway.

The entire cave was in a state of disarray far worse than when Bai Yunfei left it. Two giant fissures ran along the cave walls and the floors were filled with stalagmites that weaved in and out of one another in every way as if the scorpion was fighting a devastating battle.

“Swish!”

A swing of the blade flung down onto the scorpion, eliciting another loud screech and a splurt of blood from the scorpion. As its lifeblood escaped its body, the light in all three of its eyes slowly leaked away as well. Even its giant pincers collapsed onto the ground without another sound.

Standing at the very front of the cave entrance was a young man in white. In his hand was a meter long blade that had a curve like a crescent moon three fingers in width. Because of his recent kill of the scorpion, there was a pleased look on his face.

Right on the other side of the scorpion was another fair-skinned man in white as well. He was considerably smaller than the first, but what struck him out as unique was the fact that he had disproportionately squinty eyes. The disharmony made for a rather comedic effect.

The latter let out a relieved sigh after a successful confirmation of the scorpion’s death. Striding towards the scorpion, he plunged his fist into the crack on the scorpion’s head and fumbled about for

a brief moment before taking it back out. He shook his fist to clear it of the dripping blood to reveal a small chicken-sized crystal that glowed both orange and cyan in color—this was the scorpion’s soul crystal.

With the soul crystal in hand, the squinty-eyed man walked to his companion, “Brother, we’ve have good luck so far! Not only did we get a thousand-year-old wind mushroom, we’ve killed a Flying Scorpion and got a fifth-class soul crystal! We’ll get a good haul for this!”

The other man gave a nod of his head with a smile. Pulling at his weapon, there was a slight “kachink!” sound before the weapon split into two identical looking blades!

One of the blades was given to the squinty-eyed fellow while the youth looked at the soul crystal in his companion’s hand. “Yea, it’s been pretty good luck. If not for that kid’s ‘help’, we’ve never be able to get these two treasures so easily.”

“Hehe, if we’re going to be serious, that kid was something else! He’s a late-stage Soul Sprite like you, but he can fight a fifth-class soulbeast like it’s nothing! The amount of soul armaments he has....maybe he’s from the Crafting School?”

As soon as he stored away his blade, the youth shook his hand once more to retrieve the daggers Bai Yunfei threw during his battle with the scorpion. Inspecting them for just a brief moment, he shook his head, “Don’t assume that just because someone has plenty of soul armaments, they’re from the Crafting School. We’ve no less than ten soul armaments each, do you think we’re men from the Crafting School then too?”

“That’s not the same; ours are low grade ones. The ones that kid took out are higher quality than ours. Even the daggers he throws out are soul armament! Even how his money is spent is far beyond how we do with ours....his soul armaments are on a whole ‘nother level! That bizarre golden rope, that amazing spear, and that

powerful bracer....if we could just take that then we'd....”

He didn't get a response however, as the youth only bothered to stash away the daggers in deep thought....

.....

Roughly half an hour passed before Shao Ling took Bai Yunfei into a small depression in the mountain to reach a small village with what seemed to be ten households total. There were fields and livestock sheds scattered here and there, and the women and children could be seen scurrying around to work the fields or tend to the livestock. Not a single male could be seen, but Shao Ling had said that they were all hunting in the mountains and that they wouldn't be back til the afternoon.

Heading straight into the residence to the left, Shao Ling spoke out straight away to the squatted figure feeding several bunnies inside. “Sis! We've a guest! Can you bring out some clean clothes for us to wear? It's freezing!”

Startled, the figure leapt straight to her feet to reveal her appearance in full. She wore a long skirt that covered her entire body and two pigtails could be seen draped behind her head. Her face was oval-shaped and had a series of freckles that complimented her innocent-looking eyes that studied Bai Yunfei standing dubiously behind Shao Ling. Whether it was from this way or that, she looked nothing more than like a small little sister of the family that Bai Yunfei felt practically embarrassed to be stared at.

“Big brother Bai, this is my older sister, Xiao Fang.” He introduced Bai Yunfei to her before quipping on an additional line, “She's also the prettiest girl in our village!”

“Shao Ling—what on earth happened to you? Why are you dripping wet? And...who's this....” Throwing down the straws in her hand, the girl began to fret over and question Shao Ling.

Bai Yunfei could see the look of doubt she had for him—did he turn into some sort of untrustworthy person?

“I saved him! When brother Bai fell into the river, I saved him! Then he saved me and sent a tiger packing...”

“What do you mean sent a tiger packing? Who is he; what did he do?”

“Brother Bai is a....uhm. Brother Bai, what do you do again? And why were you in these mountains?” Shao Ling scratched his head. Throughout the entire way back home, he had been so caught up in how amazing Bai Yunfei was with his ‘martial arts’ that he completely forgot to ask the important questions.

“....” An angry knot formed on Xiao Fang’s head, “You don’t even know what type of person he is and you still brought him back home?!”

“Haha, please don’t worry, miss. I’m no bad guy—just your ordinary adventurer. I was just looking for some ingredients in the mountains when I was attacked by a wild beast when I wasn’t paying attention. Thank goodness for Shao Ling’s appearance, I would’ve fell down the waterfall if it weren’t for him.” Bai Yunfei gave the girl a friendly smile.

Adventurers were in the same vein as mercenaries. They were ones that earned the trust of the people to do their work for rewards. Whether they themselves were ordinary people or soul cultivators, this was a ‘profession’ that either could do.

Xiao Fang may just be a small village girl, but even she had heard of adventurers before from the elders. In any case, Bai Yunfei didn’t seem like he was lying, so her guard dropped ever so slightly. But still, she just had to press on, “Adventurer? You’re an adventurer and you still can’t swim?”

“Ah....that wa—was an...accident...” Bai Yunfei grinned awkwardly while silently vowing to himself that he’d learn to

swim for sure as soon as possible.

“Okay okay! Let’s forget about it for now. Don’t be so suspicious of everyone sis! Brother Bai isn’t some sort of bad guy; let us change first! Brother Bai, come thi—hold on. How come your clothes are already dry?”

Bai Yunfei hadn’t the nerve to tell him that being stuck in wet clothes was so uncomfortable he used his elemental fire inside his body to dry up his clothes. “You know....the wind blew it dry.”

“....” Shao Ling looked down to his own still dripping wet clothes with a look of befuddlement.

Waving his hands, Bai Yunfei spoke, “Go and change your clothes, Shao Ling. I’ll wait for you outside.”

“Eh? Why not come insi—” Before he could finish, his sister dragged him inside one of the rooms.

Seeing how uneasy the girl was around him, Bai Yunfei just had to shake his head. “If I was a bad guy, would there even be a point to you being so uneasy?”

Chapter 167: Post Battle Analysis

“Sis, why aren’t you letting brother Bai in? He’s—”

“Stop talking. Hurry up and change your clothes!” Xiao Fang threw a new change of clothes to him. “Who told you to bring home a random stranger? Mom and dad aren’t home, what if something happened?” She scolded.

A frown etched itself on her brother’s face. “You still think brother Bai is a bad guy, what’s with all this suspicion? Let me tell you, brother Bai is amazing! He can beat back a tiger, even brother Zhu Zi can’t do that!”

The defiance from Shao Ling surprised even her.

As she prepared herself to talk back to him, an abrupt clamor from the back of the house distracted her.

“Dad and mom are back!” Her face lit up, “Let’s go back too.”

Outside the house, Bai Yunfei came to realize that there were people coming down from the mountains as well. These newcomers were dressed like hunters with hunting crossbows in one hand and game, such as hares and pheasants, in the other hand. They sauntered toward the village with laughs and grins on their faces.

While Bai Yunfei tried to figure out how to address these, Xiao Fang came scurrying out with the newly-dressed Shao Ling tailing after her. No longer wary of Bai Yunfei, Xiao Fang gave Bai Yunfei a slight nod on her way to the incoming people.

“Brother Bai, our parents are back! Hold on a sec now, I’ll introduce you to them!” Shao Ling piped up on his way past him.

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A single conversation was all it took for Shao Ling’s parents and the other villagers to express an extremely amicable and friendly

reception. Perhaps it was his fitting conversational mannerisms or perhaps it was his cordial personality, but whatever it was, even Xiao Fang became friendlier to him.

It was when Shao Ling mentioned that Bai Yunfei would be staying with them for the time being that a brief flash of murderous intent rose from the one stalwart youth named Zhu Zi. The reason for this was a complete mystery to Bai Yunfei.

Shao Ling had five family members including himself. There was his older sister Xiao Fang, his parents, and a bedridden grandmother. His mother was currently out picking vegetables, so she wouldn't return to the village until later. That night, the family laid out a series of meat and vegetables for Bai Yunfei to enjoy. During the meal, Shao Ling continued to brag again and again to the rest of the family about how Bai Yunfei had scared away the tiger with so much enthusiasm that it felt more as if he was the one who scared the tiger away. In truth, Shao Ling had absolutely no idea how Bai Yunfei had accomplished such a feat since he had the living daylights scared out of him during that moment.

Heavy rainfall came that night—much to Bai Yunfei's delight. He was tired of sleeping out in the forests and eating game, one of the reasons why he followed Shao Ling back to his village. Moreover, the major battle and escape he went through took a lot out of him, so he wanted a rest.

Of course, he wanted to ask for directions too...

An additional bed was rolled out for him in Shao Ling's room for Bai Yunfei to sleep on. After Shao Ling fell asleep, Bai Yunfei sat upright on his bed and made a detailed observation of the state his body was in. As soon as he reconfirmed that the scorpion's poison was completely neutralized and gone from his body, Bai Yunfei thought back to the battle to come up with a post-battle analysis.

"I can't let myself be confused by my enemies! Even if they look

like a scorpion, I can't take them to be a scorpion. They could be a scorpion with wings like a dragonfly..." Came the very first conclusion.

"Being able to use two elements doesn't make one stronger. It's kind of a double-edged sword in a way too; one that can't balance between the two won't always be as strong as someone that focuses on one element... I have to focus on cultivating the elemental fire it seems. Without the right amount of strength, I can't allow myself to start on a second.

"The Upgrade Technique really boosted my strength to its limits if I could beat a scorpion that was using only one of its two elements... it was a fifth-tier soulbeast at any rate, and it was still beaten down by the Upgrade Technique...

"But — am I not depending too much on the Upgrade Technique? Without this equipment, I'd be putty in the hands of the scorpion, wouldn't I?" Bai Yunfei eyed the Flame-edge Bracer on his right arm with great concern. Pondering to himself for a moment longer, he shook his head with a self-mocking laugh. "What am I even thinking? To not use the Upgrade Technique, what am I—an idiot? The Upgrade Technique is a part of my strength. Using it to improve my strength is my strongest aspect! Why should I feel bad about relying on it? Really now!

"Besides, the stronger I get, the stronger my opponents will get as well. The equipment I'll have won't always be able to keep up with my growth either..." Bai Yunfei took off the Goldsilk Armor he was wearing underneath his robes. He placed it in front of him to inspect. All over the surface, several intertwining cracks could be seen here and there, and some parts of it was missing some threads. This was the accumulation of wear-and-tear from all his constant battles in the past.

"And these accessories that increase my attributes are gradually starting to get weaker too. Though the ones that give me a percentile increase are clearly way better than the ones that give a

numerical increase..."

The strongest accessories he had at the moment were 'High-grade' ones with the +10 equipment granting him an additional sixty points in bonuses. To Bai Yunfei, the effects weren't as nice as they were before, but the amount of items he had was still quite impressive.

He felt rather distracted when he touched the Goldsilk Armor. It had been with him for the past half year, and memories of it came flooding back to him with that touch. When he found it in the Blackwood Stronghold, getting to know Li Chengfeng, fighting a Soul Personage, fighting a Soul Warrior, and destroying the bandits—he could kill those type of soul cultivators with a flick of a finger now, but those times had been exceptionally hard on him...

Unknowingly, half a year had passed since then. Somehow, Bai Yunfei had grown from being a weakling during that time.

At some point during his thoughts, Bai Yunfei was jolted back to awareness by Shao Ling's rambling sleeptalk. Wrapping up his thoughts with a shake of his head, Bai Yunfei wiped some dust off of the Goldsilk Armor before putting it back on. He wasn't quite willing to upgrade this item in particular yet. It was his strongest defensive soul item, and risking the chance of failure wasn't worth the candle used to light up the room. He might as well upgrade another item in its place.

"I'll get some rest after doing my routine. Then I'll leave this village for the Pingchuan Province in two days."

This so-called routine was basically him upgrading several equipment as he pleased before bed. He'd stop whenever he'd like, or if his luck was particularly bad that day, he'd leave some items for a time when he felt luckier.

.....

Roughly forty minutes later.

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +58 Attack

+10 Additional Effect: +112 Attack is added.

Upgrade Requirement: 29 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei looked at a jadeite ring in his hand with a pleased smile. “Haha, good! Didn’t think I’d get three +10 accessories. The additional effects aren’t anything special, but they aren’t that bad either.

“Oh? I’ve already run out of items to upgrade?” After storing away the ring, Bai Yunfei realized that the space ring holding all the items he wanted to upgrade was clean out of items.

“Wow! I run out of stuff fast...” Bai Yunfei shook his head derisively. Just as he prepared himself to go to sleep, a sudden thought entered his head. Shaking his right hand, another item appeared in it.

It was the +8 straw hat he was so fond of wearing on his head.

Considering his ‘situation,’ today was quite decent. He might as well upgrade this one.

“Upgrade.”

Upgrade Successful

“Upgrade...”

Upgrade Successful

“.....”

Chapter 168: The Walk-on Strawhat

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Normal

Upgrade Level: +10

Defense: 2

Additional Defense: 10

+10 Additional Effect: Weaken presence by 10%

Upgrade Requirement: 9 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei's heart skipped a beat—it was a success!

"Eh? Presence? What stat is this?" He was at a loss for words when it came to looking at this newfound effect. Bai Yunfei had never seen it before.

"A completely new effect!" He nearly cried out in joy. To have a new type of effect pop up meant that he had discovered a new layer of mystery to the Upgrade Technique.

"Presence...? I can understand what it does based on its name, but—can something like that really be weakened?" Bai Yunfei placed the straw hat on his head.

Absolutely nothing.

"Then... does it work against other people?" Bai Yunfei thought. "If I wear it, will people be 10% less aware of my 'presence?' What an odd effect... but the Upgrade Technique doesn't lie. That means... I can become someone no one notices!"

Feeling as if he managed to grab hold of an idea, Bai Yunfei began to grow more and more curious at the thought.

"Weakening the presence means to not be noticed so that people will overlook me. That means... stealth!"

“Good stuff! Super good!” Bai Yunfei eyed the hat with bright eyes, “Who would’ve thought that such an ordinary-looking hat would gain such a powerful effect! That was super worth it! But still... 10% is a little too...”

“Ugh... I’m getting too greedy. Something like this is already pretty good!” Bai Yunfei realized that whenever he upgraded something into something even better, his ‘greedy’ nature came out. This wouldn’t do...

Just slightly beating himself up for these thoughts, Bai Yunfei thought, “Weakening my presence means to have other people overlook me. Wouldn’t that mean I’d become a walk-on character then? Haha, fine then! I’ll call this hat the ‘Walk-on Strawhat!’”

Satisfied, Bai Yunfei stored away the hat and lay back on his bed to rest. Tomorrow he would experiment with the strawhat’s effect and see just how good a 10% decrease of his presence would be.

.....

The entire night continued in a heavy rainfall, leaving the next morning fresh but clear. The trees and grass were filled with crystalline droplets of water—morning dew that glistened in the first rays of the sun.

In this peaceful, quiet village, plumes of smoke rose up from the chimneys and into the sky. Here and there, the crowing of roosters and the baying of dogs could be heard breaking the silence, ushering the village into another lively day.

To the leftmost side of the village, there was a rather excited and exuberant voice coming from one of the rooms.

“1675 ! 1676 ! 1678...”

On his bed, Shao Ling’s eyes were focused entirely on the sight in front of him. His face was red from excitement as he counted off a number one after another.

Right in front of him, Bai Yunfei was on the ground with his left

arm behind his back and the fingers of his right arm pressed against the ground as he did his push ups. With each rise, Shao Ling would spout out a number as a clear indication of how many push ups Bai Yunfei had completed so far.

There was a good reason for this. Just half an hour before, Shao Ling begged Bai Yunfei to teach him how to fight incessantly, spouting something about how he wanted to beat brother Zhu Zi as the strongest person in the village. Bai Yunfei didn't know how to teach someone though. Soul Cultivators were capable of cultivation. Ordinary people were not. Unable to take it any longer, Bai Yunfei relented.

The very first step to learning how to fight was to temper the body.

Who would've thought that Shao Ling would then drop down to the floor and do a hundred consecutive push ups without batting an eye?

It would seem that life as a village boy was tenacious enough for his body to undergo a lot of physical development.

In the end, Bai Yunfei added on another stipulation, "If you can do half as many as I can, I'll teach you then."

And so, the result here and today was what developed from that.

By the time he got to two thousand push ups, Bai Yunfei lost all interest in it and stood up. Dusting himself off, he said, "That's all to it. Whenever you can do half of that, I'll teach you."

Up until now, Shao Ling had been red with excitement, but Bai Yunfei's words deflated his mood immediately. "Half?! That's a thousand push ups! How could I do—even brother Zhu Zi wouldn't be able to do that much! How could I do that!?"

"Haha. As long as you hone yourself everyday, you'll become strong one day. That's how I became strong." Bai Yunfei consoled him.

“Wha—really?”

“Really.” For the sake of disengaging from this troublesome request, Bai Yunfei had ever so shamelessly lied to this poor fellow, but in his mind, he thought, “Training the body isn’t wrong by any means, so this means I shouldn’t be lying to him either, right?”

It was right at that moment when the doors behind Bai Yunfei were suddenly pushed open to reveal Xiao Fang. Striding into the room, she said, “Shao Ling, what in the world are you doing so early in the mo—eep!!”

The rest of Xiao Fang’s words died in her mouth. She ran back out of the room like a frightened hare with a face bright-red full of embarrassment. When she entered the room, the very first thing that met her eyes was the rugged body of Bai Yunfei.

“Uh...” The two males in the room were speechless. Awkwardly, Bai Yunfei put on his clothes and turned sheepishly to Shao Ling, “Well, we should go eat breakfast then...”

.....

When afternoon came, Bai Yunfei decided that now would be the best time to test out the effects of the Walk-on Strawhat. As soon as Shao Ling wore the hat, Bai Yunfei could feel with his soulsense that Shao Ling’s aura made a sudden dip.

Naturally, only a soul cultivator would be able to properly sense this distinct change. A regular person would practically overlook him.

He saw the effects first-hand when both Shao Ling and him delivered several things to Shao Ling’s next door neighbor, uncle Li. The very first thing that Bai Yunfei was asked was, “Where’s Shao Ling?”

Then uncle Li noticed Shao Ling a moment later. Uncle Li complained right after, saying that Shao Ling shouldn’t have been hiding in the corner and that he didn’t even notice him.

Pleased with the effects of the Walk-on Strawhat, Bai Yunfei stored it away. Of course, he also decided to keep secret the fact that he pulled the wool over uncle Li's eyes by pretending to deliver things to him.

Xiao Fang on the other hand went scarlet whenever she saw Bai Yunfei; most likely because of the fact that catching sight of Bai Yunfei that morning still made her extremely embarrassed.

What was completely astounding to Bai Yunfei was just how embarrassed she could be!

"I was the one that you saw. The one that should be embarrassed should be me! I didn't give you permission to look. What's your excuse!?"

Yet Bai Yunfei had to admit that Xiao Fang was an extremely hardworking and traditional girl. In the morning she could be seen sweeping the floors, washing the clothes, feeding the chickens, and other completing other housework without a complaint or misstep in her stride. Even to the neighbors, she was a courteous young woman. A sight like that was rare to come by.

"The guy she marries will be a lucky one."

Of course—this compliment was made from a completely objective perspective. He didn't have any improper feelings whatsoever.

In the afternoon, another incident occurred.

It came to Xiao Fang's attention that there was a shortage of firewood, so she prepared herself to chop some more wood, but just as she was about to start working, Bai Yunfei stopped her so that he could help out.

Reddening in the face, she tried to decline Bai Yunfei's offer, but he took the axe from her anyways, "No worries, just leave it to me!" He said.

When he took the axe, his hand brushed against Xiao Fang's

supple arm by mere accident, causing her to blush again. Smiling awkwardly, he muttered out an apology and paid no more attention to it.

Shao Ling assisted Bai Yunfei by replacing the firewood each time he chopped. Bai Yunfei was completely unaware that not too far away in the forest, a pair of eyes was watching him.

From the start of when Bai Yunfei and Xiao Fang started their little quibble, the owner of these eyes had been carefully watching, and when the young woman left the place with a bashful expression thanks to Bai Yunfei's 'frivolous' attitude, the eyes of the watcher immediately glowered with a spark of indignation and hostility.

Chapter 169: Going Hunting

“Ha!”

The muscles of Zhu Zi bulged, to emphasize his strength, as he latched onto the coral horns of a deer. Following a loud grunt, he lifted the small calf-sized deer up and over so he could then slam it back down onto the ground. From there, it only took another five or six punches to render the deer paralyzed. It remained on the ground without strength to move.

A clamor arose from the people around him as the villagers extolled him for his feat.

“Zhu Zi, you’re simply amazing! What a man to capture even a bulldeer!”

“Aye, those are beasts that can beat a wild boar when they reach adulthood!”

“Zhu Zi, thank you! Imagine just how many of us would have been injured by it if not for you...”

“Zhu Zi...”

“.....”

Having been lavished by the high accolades of these villagers, Zhu Zi was pleased. Ever since he had found that peculiar white stone when he was ten, his body had undergone a massive transformation. No longer was he the same sickly boy from long ago. Now, he was a strong male with a body that was practically immune to every disease and sickness that could be thrown at it. Zhu Zi was now the man that every villager would praise as the best hunter in the village.

“Haha, let’s get this bulldeer tied up and ready to go, we’re goi—”

“Aah! Big brother Bai, be careful!”

The startled voice of Shao Ling suddenly cut into Zhu Zi’s speech,

causing everyone to look to the right side of the forest.

Before anyone could move even a finger, a “thwack” could be heard following the sound of something falling to the ground. Shao Ling’s voice cut through the forest again, but this time with a tone of amazement. “Woah! Big brother Bai! You did it! You’re amazing!”

Befuddled by Shao Ling’s shout, everyone looked to the right side of the forest where the thicket was slowly being pushed apart. As soon as the thicket was pushed away, the source of why Shao Ling was so excited was made apparent to everyone else, which resulted in their jaws dropping to the floor.

What shocked them wasn’t Bai Yunfei or Shao Ling. Instead, on Bai Yunfei’s right shoulder was a giant water buffalo...

.....

All around Bai Yunfei, the very same group of villagers that had been praising Zhu Zi were now smiling and laughing around Bai Yunfei. Even Shao Ling was going on and on about the amazingness of Bai Yunfei and the story behind the catch. Compared to the water buffalo on Bai Yunfei’s shoulder, the deer wasn’t even half its size. With nary a word, Zhu Zi gave a small snort.

But he said nothing.

“Shao Ling, why are you here?”

A rather crisp voice suddenly made itself known, allowing Zhu Zi’s face to finally light up. Turning his head, he saw Xiao Fang walk toward the group. A bamboo weaved basket was strapped to her back and a tiny hoe hung by her left side, but on her face was an inquisitive stare that roved over everyone.

“Sis? Aren’t you supposed to be picking herbs in the east? Why are you here?” Shao Ling asked with an equal amount of curiosity.

First greeting everyone else in the group, Xiao Fang then replied

to Shao Ling. “This IS the eastern forest! You all should be hunting in the northern mountains. How did you manage to come all the way here?”

“Wha— this is the eastern forests?” For a while, Shao Ling was lost. In the midst of a confused look around, a realization hit him, “Oh! I know! We must have chased that river doe all the way over here without realizing it...”

“Xiao Fang, why are you collecting herbs all by yourself? Wasn’t aunty with you? It’s dangerous to be by yourself with so many beasts around here...” Zhu Zi questioned Xiao Fang in concern.

“Mom felt worried about grandma, so she went home first. I’ll be careful, don’t you worry brother Zhu Zi...” Xiao Fang nodded her head to reassure him. Halfway through her nod, her eyes landed on the not yet trussed up bulldeer at his feet.

“A bulldeer!” she remarked. “Brother Zhu Zi, did you hunt this? How amazing; this is a grea—”

Halfway through her words, Xiao Fang’s eyes landed on the water buffalo on Bai Yunfei’s shoulder. When she had first arrived, the villagers had blocked her view so she had been unable to see the buffalo.

Laughing as he greeted her, Bai Yunfei waved, “Miss Xiao Fang, how goes herb hunting?”

“Ah? Oh! I just need some Adder’s Tongue (A randomly named item, if there is any grass with this name, it is purely coincidental)...” Xiao Fang replied to him with a rather blank stare.

“Ah, Adder’s Tongue? Then let me help you with tha— watch out!” Bai Yunfei had barely enough time to finish his sentence when a sudden movement from the corner of his eye prompted him to cry out a warning to the other villagers.

The bulldeer that had previously been motionless on the ground

had suddenly sprung to its feet. It had been pretending to be unconscious! Before any of the villagers could react, the bulldeer made a beeline for Xiao Fang!

Bringing its head down, the deer's two giant coral-like horns ominously oriented themselves in Xiao Fang's direction. Practically no time elapsed before the bulldeer was well within ramming distance of Xiao Fang! Like a deer in headlights, Xiao Fang was rooted right where she was. If she didn't move out of the way now, then the consequences would be dire for her.

Out of all the villagers, Zhu Zi was not only the closest one to the bulldeer, but also the fastest one of them to respond. He dug his feet into the mud beneath him preparing to fly toward the bulldeer like an arrow released from its bow. He flew straight toward it to grab its tail.

It came as a complete shock when the bulldeer kicked up its behind so that it flew up into the air, and with a decisive kick, the two hind legs shot straight for Zhu Zi!

“Bang!”

Zhu Zi was right in the middle of grabbing the tail of the bulldeer, so the two hindlegs of the beast caught him right in the abdomen. The hindlegs of the bulldeer, though far from dangerous, were more than enough to send him flying back with spit coming from his mouth.

Not only had it been effective in kicking back Zhu Zi, the impact force doubled its speed toward Xiao Fang!

“Sis!”

“Xiao Fang!”

Zhu Zi, Shao Ling, and Xiao Fang's father cried out one after another in horror—not a single one of them would have enough time to save her. Thus, they were horrified at the oncoming danger.

Xiao Fang shared their horror, but while they were vocal in their terror, she herself was silent. She could see the bulldeer charging at her. She could see that the coral-like horns could claim her life without a problem, but the shock of it all left her mortified.

A sudden tightening of something on her right wrist snapped Xiao Fang out of her stupor. Pulled out of the way of bulldeer's charge, she was brought to safety behind a large figure.

"Don't be afraid."

Those three words didn't even register to the still bewildered Xiao Fang. All she could see was the figure clench his right fist to punch the incoming bulldeer.

"Thwack!!"

Just as fast as it came, the bulldeer went flying in the opposition direction, tumbling to a stop right in front of the motionless villagers. Both the nose and the mouth of the bulldeer were filled with blood, and in its current state, it was clear for everyone to see that it was dead.

"....."

"....."

Silence.

An eerie silence pervaded the forest for a good while as everyone stared at the dead bulldeer in mute shock. For as long as the forest was devoid of sound, their minds were devoid of thought.

Chapter 170: Sudden Mishap

“Miss Xiao Fang, are you alright?”

Bai Yunfei’s calm words broke the silence within the forest and jolted everyone back to reality.

“Ah? Oh! I’m... I’m fine. Th—thank you...” Still slightly in a daze, Xiao Fang managed to reply to him.

“Haha, as long as you’re fine, there’s no need to thank me.” Waving his hand, Bai Yunfei gave her a smile.

By now, all of the villagers were crowding around the two. Uncle Xu and Shao Ling were the most prominent in looking over Xiao Fang, fearing that she had been injured, while the other villagers gibbered almost incoherently over one another. Leaving them to their antics, Bai Yunfei walked over to Zhu Zi who was still retching on the floor. Extending a hand to him, Bai Yunfei asked, “Are you alright?”

The hand was ignored. Zhu Zi gave a look of mixed emotions toward Bai Yunfei for just a brief moment as if trying to understand the person. Choosing to crawl up from the ground by himself, he stalked toward Xiao Fang while massaging his neck.

Shaking his head, Bai Yunfei chose not to pay him any attention.

Now that everyone was calm once more, Shao Ling turned to look at his own personal hero with a renewed amount of awe and respect.

“Big brother Bai! Big brother Bai! What are you looking at?”

Shao Ling’s words jolted Bai Yunfei from his thoughts. Looking to the younger boy, Bai Yunfei replied, “Eh? Shao Ling, what’s up?”

“That’s what I’m asking you, what are you looking at?” Shao Ling’s pointed at the rest of the villagers, who were busy inquiring

about Zhu Zi's injuries. "Everyone's saying we've got enough game for today, so we're ready to go home! What were you looking at?"

"Oh. Got it. Let's go back home then..." Bai Yunfei nodded his head and moved to pick up the bulldeer. From there, he smiled and walked toward Zhu Zi...

.....

Life in the village over the next two days was extremely blissful for Bai Yunfei. Hunting game, chopping wood, and the overall relaxation of his mind and body--Bai Yunfei felt all of the fatigue and weariness he had accumulated on his journey be washed away.

Xiao Fang didn't have some sort of melodramatic change of affection for him after he saved her, but at the very least, she treated him far more amicably than before. It wasn't just her. The rest of the village had started to treat Bai Yunfei with respect as if he was now a hero.

There was one person in particular that didn't treat him as such, of course. That person was Zhu Zi. At times, the amount of hostility from him was left unmasked, but whether that was done on purpose or on accident was never clear to Bai Yunfei. Still, it was enough for him to realize that this kid liked Xiao Fang. Upon realizing that, Bai Yunfei himself began to dislike this "hero saving his woman" type of respect that came from living with Xiao Fang's family.

The mystery on why Zhu Zi treated him like an enemy was finally solved, but Bai Yunfei lacked the motivation to explain things to Zhu Zi. In any case, he was about to leave soon, so he didn't really bother to think hard about the issue at all.

According to his own observations, Zhu Zi was at an expected level for the common standard usage of soulforce. He hadn't yet awakened, but Zhu Zi's physique was exceptionally well off; it was practically challenging the limits of what the normal human could do. Catching an incoming bulldeer with one's own hands was

something only a few commoners could pull off.

His attitude was fine as well. Even though he disliked Bai Yunfei, he never sought trouble with him and he treated the other villagers well. Perhaps it was because he knew that he wasn't a match for Bai Yunfei even if he tried to make a sneak attack.

On the afternoon of the third day, Bai Yunfei could be seen roosting on top of a tree branch, soaking in the sun. In his mouth was a long piece of dogtail grass that was slowly being chewed as he planned out his future journey.

"I've pretty much done my fill of resting. I should leave tomorrow morning and cross the mountains to reach the Great Plains Province. With time I should be able to reach the Crafting School..."

The Crafting School accepted students into their school twice every year on the fifth day of the fifth month and the eleventh day of the eleventh month. It was now just entering the tenth month, leaving only forty days or so left until the deadline. So with that in mind, Bai Yunfei felt that it was time to hurry to the Crafting School. If he delayed any longer, he'd miss the deadline, and that would be very annoying.

Of course, getting there on one of these two days was just the easy part. Each time they held the enrollment, countless of people would apply, but only a meager few would be accepted.

"Big brother Bai! Big brother Bai, where are you!?"

The panicked cry of Shao Ling knocked Bai Yunfei out of his thoughts. Jumping to his feet and off the branch, Bai Yunfei called out, "Shao Ling, I'm right here! What's going on?"

As soon Shao Ling came into view, Bai Yunfei's eyes narrowed together in concern.

Just several meters away from him, Shao Ling could be seen hobbling. Countless abrasions and scratches adorned his body, and

his right arm had a single long wound that oozed with blood. Holding him by the arm was Zhu Zi, whose normally calm but formidable-looking face was now as pale as parchment. His left arm was twisted and hung uselessly by the side—clearly broken. Bloodstains marked his chest, and blood could still be seen spilling from his mouth.

At the sight of Bai Yunfei, Shao Ling's face lit up. Scrambling on over as fast as he could while holding onto Zhu Zi, he cried out to Bai Yunfei, “Big brother Bai! Something terrible has happened! You have to save my sis!”

Hurrying on over them the two, Bai Yunfei began to transmit some of his soulforce into their bodies to aid their recovery. “What’s wrong?” He asked. “Weren’t you helping Xiao Fang pick some herbs? What in the world did this to you? Where’s Xiao Fang?”

“How dare you!!” Zhu Zi managed to give off a surprisingly loud retort as he knocked away Bai Yunfei’s arm. Grabbing at the hems of Bai Yunfei’s clothes with his remaining good hand, he snarled, “Just who are you!? You bastard! If something happens to Xiao Fang, then I won’t forgive you!”

Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows knit together in confusion. Pulling Zhu Zi’s hand away, he asked, “What do you mean? It has to do with me? What in the world happened to Xiao Fang?”

Then he noticed Zhu Zi’s wounds. Not only was he angry, Zhu Zi was so injured that with each word he snarled out, blood accompanied his spittle. Clearly, he was in no condition to be answering questions.

“Shao Ling, you tell me! Tell me about what happened in detail! No matter what danger Xiao Fang is in, I’ll rescue her!”

Pushing his soulforce into the two again, Bai Yunfei started to accelerate their healing.

It was unknown whether or not Bai Yunfei's commanded him to calm down or if he had been able to calm down himself, but Shao Ling managed to take in a deep breath to summarize the events.

"The three of us went behind the mountains to collect herbs, and since brother Zhu Zi was with us, we went a little farther than usual. When we reached the northeastern valleys, two men suddenly popped out of nowhere. They... they were strong! They managed to grab sis as soon as they came! Brother Zhu Zi tried to fight them, but one of them had only needed to use one hand to completely defeat him! Even at his best, brother Zhu Zi was no match for them. It was a baby trying to fight an adult..."

"They... they said that we were to go back and tell big brother Bai to come to them. If you don't, then... then they'd kill sis! Big brother Bai... just who are you? Why are they after you? You have to save my sis!"

Bai Yunfei's eyes narrowed together as an irritable and suspicious emotion filled his head.

"Their target is me... but who? Who would want to fight me?"

Chapter 171: Crescent Moon Killers

“Their target is me... but who? Who would want to fight me?”

A strange but doubtful feeling welled up inside of Bai Yunfei’s head. From what Shao Ling was saying, Xiao Fang was captured by enemies for the express purpose of provoking him.

“Is it the Glacial School? Or maybe the Beast Taming School?” Bai Yunfei just had to laugh when he made these two conjectures. There was practically no way that the Beast Taming School would be after him, and the Glacial School wouldn’t bother with trying to capture a random commoner to get to him.

“The fact that they’ve kidnapped Xiao Fang is very obvious. They want to intimidate me. This means I’ve only a few options left ahead of me... But this means that creepy feeling of someone looking at me was actually them! Dammit! I was an idiot to think that just because I was in a remote village, I’d have no enemies around...

“And if they came for me, that means they know I’m a soul cultivator, but to take Xiao Fang as a hostage means they’re unsure of if they could beat me in a one-on-one battle!

“There’s two people. That means the strongest one shouldn’t be anywhere past the Soul Sprite stage. There’d be no point on kidnapping her then, but I can’t be sure if they’ve any other hidden comrades with them. If that’s the case, their strengths should be weaker than the other two. In short... their strengths must be on par with mine. They just want an extra assurance that they’d be able to beat me! So, there’s a hostage, a trap, the advantage in terrain, and probably several other factors on their side...

“But just who are they? And what do they want with me?” Bai Yunfei’s mind raced furiously as he tried to think of a solution.

“If we rule out the motive for revenge, it has to be something else then. I do have plenty of items worth looking after... the Upgrade Technique and soul armaments!” Suddenly, Bai Yunfei’s eyes light up as if he had reached a realization. “They know about the soul armaments I have, they know about my strength, they know that I’m a strong soul cultivator, and they’ve been spying on me for the past several days... Ah! They have to be the soul cultivators that stole the treasure from the cave with the scorpion!”

The more he thought about it, the more he felt that he was right! Then a flash of fury washed over him, “This is the ‘oriole’ from before! They stole MY treasure, and now they want to take my upgrade equipment! And they’re using a delicate woman as a hostage to boot!”

“Whatever the case, saving lives is most important!” Now that he had the general gist of things, Bai Yunfei was no longer hesitant.

In the eyes of some soul cultivators, the lives of a commoner wasn’t even worth mentioning. There was no time to waste then. If something happened to Xiao Fang, how would Bai Yunfei ever forgive himself?

By now, the wounds of Shao Ling were practically healed, and the heavy wounds of Zhu Zi were more or less stable. With a quick stabilization of the wounds on his left arm, Bai Yunfei said to Zhu Zi and Shao Ling, “You two head on back first! I’ll definitely bring Xiao Fang back!”

“No! I’m going with you!” Zhu Zi tried to speak with as much of a calm demeanor as he could. With his right arm pulling at his left arm, his expression was rather calm despite his wounds.

“I’m... I’m going too! I have to save sis!” Shao Ling spoke in earnest.

“What in the world are you doing?” Bai Yunfei’s eyes narrowed together, “This isn’t something you two can get involved in. Let me take care of it.”

“No! I’m going! Even if I can’t beat them, I’ll die trying!” Zhu Zi stood his ground.

“Big brother Bai, I’m going with you! We’ll hide by the side, who knows, maybe we’ll be of help...” Shao Ling refused to back down and pleaded with Bai Yunfei.

There just wasn’t any time to finagle with them any longer. Giving just a few seconds to mull it over, Bai Yunfei grumbled, “Fine! You guys can come, but you better listen to whatever plan I have!”

.....

The Crescent Moon Killers were one of the most prominent figures in the underworld of the Northern Cliff Province. Tang Ya and Su Xia were brothers both at the level of a late-stage Soul Sprite with the wind affinity. Even early-stage Soul Ancestors would think twice before engaging with them.

There was a good reason for that. The two brothers were said to be in possession of a pair of exceptionally strong soul armaments, two crescent moon blades—the reason behind their titular title, “Crescent Moon Killers.”

These two brothers were well-known in the underworld for always being greedy, but the ‘wealth’ they wanted didn’t mean money or material riches. It referred to what soul cultivators would consider as wealth: soul armaments, soul crystals, soul skills, etc.

Whenever they saw something they wanted, they’d do their very best to steal it. Of course, if they were to just blindly loot everything they saw, then the powerful soul cultivators in the world would be sure to make sure not a piece of their corpses remained. They never went after dangerous game. They always went after game they could for sure beat. If they were unfortunate enough to make enemies with someone they couldn’t beat, they’d have no qualms with turning around and fleeing without fighting.

They made their first ‘appearance’ eight years ago, and from there, their names skyrocketed throughout the entire Northern Cliff Province.

It was a coincidence that they heard wind of a flying scorpion in this area, so they came to investigate the mountains. After several days, they were planning on distracting the scorpion and stealing the treasure within the cave. The monster guarding the cave was a fifth-tier soulbeast, so while the task wasn’t impossible, the risks and chances of failure were too high for them to try taking it head-on.

As soon as Bai Yunfei appeared, the two men were able take the wind mushroom and even set up an ambush in the cave to kill the weakened flying scorpion.

To them, this profit was completely unexpected, but then they also saw just how many extraordinarily strong soul armaments Bai Yunfei had. It was enough for them to covet them, so they decided to steal them.

It was very possible that he might be from the Crafting School or even from a major house or another school, but the enticement was so huge that they completely disregarded the potential risks in favor of their greed.

In any case, Bai Yunfei was by himself. In this desolate mountainous area, a death could be easily committed and hidden.

Thus the two brothers spent one day tracking Bai Yunfei’s steps and then another two days to observing him. Today, they finally struck. They captured one of the villagers close to him to drag him out.

.....

“Big bro, you think this is going to work? There’s no way that kid’s going to try to save a commoner while knowing that this is a trap, right? It’s been too long already.” The squinty-eyed Su Xia

glanced at Xiao Fang who was incapacitated due to several of her acupoints being pressed. Turning his head back, he looked to the white-robed Tang Ya for an answer.

Tang Ya's eyes glanced to the peaceful-looking valley down below, "What's the rush? According to our two days of spying, we may as well try this. Even if he doesn't come, we won't be losing anything major, but if he comes... then we'll bury his remains, bones and all!"

A sudden source of furious soulsense was picked by Tang Ya at that moment, causing his eyebrows to perk up.

"He's here!"

Chapter 172: To Battle!

As Bai Yunfei drew closer to the corner of a valley due to Shao Ling's guidance, he began to leak his soulforce without concealing it in fear that the kidnappers would think that he wouldn't come for Xiao Fang. At the same time, his soulsense began to spread out in order to map out the terrain as much as he could.

"There's just two people!" Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up in relaxation.
"That's good. Xiao Fang seems to be unharmed too..."

Nearing the edge of the forest, Bai Yunfei's footsteps began to lighten up in speed. Soon enough, he made it out from the treeline and stepped onto a small clearing in the valley. Somewhere about ten meters away stood two white-robed men staring vigilantly at him. Beside them was the terrified-to-tears Xiao Fang.

Bai Yunfei shot a consoling look to Xiao Fang before turning his attention to Tang Ya and Su Xia with a pointed look. "You two and I don't even know each other, let alone have any grudges. What is the meaning behind this kidnapping?"

"Haha, little brother, let's not misunderstand the situation here. We've nothing against you. We just wanted to get your attention, that's all. We only want to conduct a trade with you." Tang Ya laughed in response to Bai Yunfei. On the sly, he probed Bai Yunfei with his soulsense — only to reveal that Bai Yunfei wasn't as strong as they expected, allowing him to sigh to himself in relief. Of course, the two hidden commoners in the bushes were completely overlooked by the two.

"Trade? What kind of trade?" Bai Yunfei asked.

"The life of this little girl here in exchange for those soul armaments of yours. How 'bout it?" Tang Ya spoke as if he was conducting a fair trade.

"Hah! That's your idea of a 'trade?'" Bai Yunfei laughed. "Did

you think I'd accept?"

Tang Ya glance at Xiao Fang behind him, "If it were me, I'd refuse, but I'd like to try in any case. What if you agree?"

"Fine, I accept!" Bai Yunfei proclaimed.

"Eh?"

The absolute 'straightforward' nature of Bai Yunfei's reply was completely unexpected by both Tang Ya and Su Xia. In fact, it had been so surprising that Tang Ya just had to ask, "What did you just say?"

The smile on Bai Yunfei's face grew even wider, "I said, I accept! Well then... take them then!"

Before Bai Yunfei finishes speaking, he gave a shake of his right hand. Three separate glints of icy-cold steel twinkled in the air, flying toward Tang Ya's head, throat, and chest!

Compared to before, Bai Yunfei's expertise in throwing knives was far better. The three upgraded daggers whistled furiously as they shot through the air. Eyes dilating in concentration rather than in surprise, Tang Ya brandished his hand in front of him. Following the swishing sounds of three daggers making contact, what came next startles everyone—Tang Ya had caught all three daggers between his fingers!

"Peh! How insignificant, I'll—" Tang Ya's disdainful words were cut short when a fourth dagger came twinkling into view! Even more startling, this fourth dagger was going even faster than the previous three! From when he opened his mouth to talk to the end, the dagger was already at his eyes!

"Tzk!"

Thanks to the +10 effect, "When thrown, increase the power of the attack by 30%," the dagger sent Tang Ya ricocheting back!

"Big bro!" Su Xia started toward his brother.

Midway there, Tang Ya's body suddenly came jumping back up, revealing the dagger caught in between his teeth!

At the most crucial moment, he had actually used his mouth to catch the dagger!

Spitting out the dagger with an ashen expression, Tang Ya shook his right hand so that a crescent moon-shaped blade appeared in his hand. Pushing off the ground, he flew toward Bai Yunfei, and Su Xia followed, "Let's get this over with, kill him!"

"That's the plan!" Bai Yunfei snorted in reply. The Fire-tipped Spear appeared in his right hand and stabbed forward unflinchingly, accepting Tang Ya's approach.

A distance of ten meters was absolutely nothing when both combatants were soul cultivators. In an instant, Bai Yunfei's Fire-tipped Spear glowed brightly with a fiery blaze as it stabbed at Tang Ya, but that stab was dodged before the spear had to be brought up to block Su Xia's stroke.

Bai Yunfei's spear sprung up once more to hopefully catch Su Xia in the throat, but then one of his opponent's blades knocked the spear away. Since Tang Ya had knocked the spear away horizontally, Bai Yunfei took advantage of the momentum to bring his right arm up. He withstood Su Xia's next chop with his Flameblade Bracer.

Starting from first contact, Bai Yunfei's spear was caught by Tang Ya and Su Xia's blades at every opportunity. The cooperation between the brothers was perfect, an airtight coordination. If it were any other late-stage Soul Sprite, they would have been defeated long ago, but Bai Yunfei was different with his upgraded equipment. He was able to defend against what he couldn't dodge, and he could also make use of the Goldsilk Armor to give himself a last-resort guard as he delivered a Ninefold Fist Force, leaving the brothers wary.

Nearly a hundred blows were exchanged before both sides had a

succinct understanding of the other side's strength. Neither of the two had gone all out, but the disparity could be estimated.

On the left, Bai Yunfei forced Su Xia back with his spear. On the right, he used his bracer to block any sword stroke from Tang Ya.

Each time Tang Ya's sword made contact with Bai Yunfei's bracer, a flurry of sparks lit up the area.

At one point, when one of the blades made contact with his Flameblade Bracer, Bai Yunfei's eyes suddenly lit up— +10 effect of the Flameblade Bracer, activate!

+10 Additional Effect: When blocking, there is a 9% chance of absorbing and converting the attack power into personal attack power, releasing it with your next attack.

(It can be held for 3 seconds. The amount of converted attack power cannot exceed the defensive strength of this item.)

His right foot stepped back behind his left.

His spear held its guard.

His right fist glowed a bright red as he clenched it.

And like a cannon, he fired it straight at Tang Ya.

Tang Ya's face fell when he realized that this fist wasn't like any of the other punches, and wanted to draw back rather than to accept. However, his sword was extended too far to pull it back. The best he could do was to lift up his left arm to reveal a small circular shield within his robes—a human tier soul armament.

“Bang!”

“Crack!”

Reinforced by the bracer's converted power, the Ninefold Fist Force completely exceeded Tang Ya's expectations! Whatever strength Tang Ya had thought Bai Yunfei possessed, he had been

completely wrong!

Under the disbelieving eyes of Tang Ya, the circular shield on his arm was broken apart by one punch!

A tremendous energy was transmitted into his arm following the breaking of the shield, prompting Tang Ya to rush his soulforce into his arm to protect himself while beating a hasty retreat.

However, there was no way Bai Yunfei would give him the chance to retreat. Tossing the Flame-tipped Spear to his right hand, he leaped forward to stab Tang Ya in the throat!

As the tip of the spear drew closer and closer to his throat, Tang Ya's eyes flashed with an idea. The arm holding his blade flicked the blade so that it would leave his hand, and in two complete rotations, the sharp blade moved, in a threatening arc, toward Bai Yunfei's throat!

The fact that Tang Ya threw his very own weapon was not within Bai Yunfei's calculations. With no other choice but to dodge, Bai Yunfei shifted his foot just slightly. He pushed off to the side, allowing the blade to fly past his ear with a painful wind stinging his cheek.

Unfortunately, Bai Yunfei's maneuver gave Tang Ya just enough time to fall back several meters. He was weaponless, so Bai Yunfei was hesitant to give up this opportunity to attack him. Twisting his waist, he activated the Wave Treading Steps and renewed his charge toward Tang Ya.

When he sent the Fire-tipped Spear stabbing forward, the white bracelet on his right arm began to shine brightly, and Bai Yunfei's eyes started shining as well—3% bonus speed, activation successful!

However, when he was about to make use of that speed, something out of the corner of his eye forced him to give up his pursuit. Throwing himself to the right of where he stood, Bai

Yunfei's head turned to look behind.

Right there! A shining spinning disk whirled past where his chest once was—it was the blade that Tang Ya had just thrown!

Back when Tang Ya threw the sharp blade, its trajectory was on the same path of Su Xia, who was in the middle of ambushing Bai Yunfei from behind. Su Xia's free hand latched onto the spinning blade as if to 'accept' it, and when he did, he followed the momentum of the spinning to send it spinning back to Tang Ya.

"What—what's going on?"

Chapter 173: Synchronizing Soul Skills

A finger rose up to touch a small cut where the brother's weapon had nicked him.

He was shocked.

The two brothers were standing together, and the two weapons they held in their hands were exactly the same shape. Both had that crescent moon-shaped curvature, causing several questions to arise in Bai Yunfei's mind.

"A boomerang-type weapon? Doesn't seem like it... the return angle was pretty strange—almost like it was—like it was being controlled by someone! Was it because of the other blade then? I've never seen a soul armament like this before!" The rapid thought process running through Bai Yunfei's head brought a sharp glare to his eyes.

"Oh-ho! Not bad, brat. Very few have been able to withstand the very first sneak attack from our 'Crescent Blades' without knowing their effects, but, will you be able to dodge the rest. I wonder..." Su Xia crowed in slight amazement.

"Instead of moving your mouth, move your hands!" Tang Ya's body glowed a bright light-green before he dashed at Bai Yunfei.

The following dozen exchanges after that brought Bai Yunfei into a state of passive defense. The two brothers would fight in conjunction with one another so that when one of them would cover the other when they attacked. Occasionally, one of them would throw out their blade to fire off a sneak attack, and each time Bai Yunfei wanted to take advantage of one of them being weaponless, the target would make use of his wind-enhanced speed to aid his evasion. Combined with the continuous dance with the blades being thrown here and there, ten minutes of battle passed without Bai Yunfei dealing any damage at all. In fact, he was on the losing side—already his arms were scratched here and there with

wounds that dug deep into his skin.

Bai Yunfei was irritated due to his current condition, but Tang Ya and Su Xia were also quite anxious with the results. Controlling the flight path of their weapons wasn't as easy as one would be led to believe. The abnormality that was Bai Yunfei's Wave Treading Steps was causing them a lot of anxiety with its strange but effective way of dodging their coordinated strikes at the very last moment—much to their vexation.

Given the time that passed, Tang Ya began to have the nagging feeling that Bai Yunfei was purposely making it so that the two brothers would slowly lose their energy. While a smart plan, Tang Ya simply didn't think that Bai Yunfei would be strong enough to fight off the two of them, but he didn't want to risk it anymore.

Taking advantage of the two regrouped, Tang Ya whispered a warning to his brother, "Fuck! We can't go on like this. We have to use that!"

.....

Bai Yunfei was in the middle of preparing his Fire-tipped Spear to greet Su Xia when he saw both brothers suddenly leap back instead of forward.

At the same time, soulforce exploded from their body, stirring the worldly energy that was within a ten meter radius of them.

His eyes narrowed. A major storm was brewing. He just knew it.

Charging forward, Bai Yufnei's Fire-tipped Spear immediately stabbed out to try and stop the two before they could put their plan into motion.

He was fast, but his opponents weren't slow by any means either. Their backwards momentum was enhanced by the elemental wind, and both their blades were taking in that elemental wind almost hungrily.

The two of them snorted slightly when noticing that Bai Yunfei

was coming quickly at them. A strange fluctuation of their soulforce was only just detected by Bai Yunfei when the two brothers peculiarly swung toward him in a cross formation!

The moment that the two brothers swung their blades, the surrounding elemental wind immediately began to pick up. Combined with the elemental wind that was gathered by them, a cyclone, about ten meters tall and two meters in diameter, immediately materialized in the area!

Blades of light-green color weaved in and out of the cyclone, sucking in pieces of stone. Branches also flew into the spinning wall of death before being sliced and crushed to pieces.

Synchronized soul skill, Devastating Winds!

It was their ultimate killing move. Thanks to the special nature of the two blades and the soulforce in their bodies, the resulting move was something that even a mid-stage Soul Ancestors wouldn't dare belittle!

One time, the two brothers relied on this very soul skill to completely overwhelm and kill a mid-stage Soul Ancestor of the water affinity.

A synchronized soul skill—as its name implies—is the product of what happens when multiple people work together to unleash a soul skill. There weren't many of these soul skills, and the pre-conditions to use one were especially high. It required the utmost cooperation between the users, and if they didn't pull it off, not only would the soul skill fail to work, there would also be a backlash.

Each synchronized soul skill was without a doubt a powerful move. Even soul cultivators one or two steps above the caster's level would be hard-pressed to take it head on.

Once the cyclone was fully formed, a furious howl accompanied it as it rolled toward Bai Yunfei. Everything in its warpath—like

stone and dirt—was blown away.

Bai Yunfei was in mid-leap when the cyclone formed, meaning that he was extremely close to it. Eyes widening, he gave up his previous attempt and flew back to escape the cyclone's radius.

However, even when he changed the direction, the cyclone changed directions with him! From behind, Su Xia started to laugh.

A brilliant gleam of light entered Bai Yunfei's eyes when he was staring at the cyclone. Retreating another ten meters, he stood still as if deciding to stop dodging. Following a shake of his right hand, the Fire-tipped Spear disappeared into his ring.

"Hmmm? Hehe, given up brat?" Su Xia laughed derisively at Bai Yunfei's actions.

"Don't tell me you're going to accept this head on. Ignorant kid, you'll know just how strong this cyclone is when it tears your body apart!"

Preliminary inspections were made of the terrain far before the battle had started. With the topographical information they had, the two brothers decided on bringing Bai Yunfei here where the wind gathered the most in the valley. With the spacious opening, the two of them would be able to use their skills to their optimal efficiency. Even if Bai Yunfei was fast enough to dodge the cyclone they were controlling, the brothers would still have back ups. Thus, when Bai Yunfei ceased his actions and stored away his weapon, the two of them thought that he was simply deciding to be suicidal.

Even though Bai Yunfei stored away the Fire-tipped Spear, he wasn't panicked. His eyes had a focused light to them in fact, and his right foot gave a half-step forward with a burst of red light from the activation of his soulforce. The crimson signs of elemental fire began to flicker into view, traveling to his right arm.

“Hisssss!”

The fabric on his right arm immediately caught fire and burned away in no time at all, revealing a nearly two meter long blade made of fire!

Flame Winged Blade!

Bai Yunfei snorted.

His right leg powerfully pushed off the ground to charge straight for the cyclone. As soon as he was about to make contact with it, the Flame Winged Blade swelled in size by a fraction and sliced through the cyclone with its burning heat!

“Don’t be so pleased with yourselves. It’s time for you to get lost!!”

“Bang!”

One explosion later, Bai Yunfei’s body was illuminated by a bright-reddish-green light.

When the elements of the world clashed, only power was the determining factor, unless you excluded the natural superiority one element might have over another. Flame—if strong enough—could overwhelm even a galestorm!

The pleased smile on Su Xia’s face froze still as he watched. The giant cyclone he and Tang Ya had only just unleashed was being dyed with a bright-red light before dissipating into an equally red steam.

“That was your ultimate move? Nothing special I guess...”

Chapter 174: Fury

“That was your ultimate move? Nothing special I guess...”

The dull tone of Bai Yunfei scratched at the ears of Tang Ya and Su Xia, prompting Su Xia to let out an incredulous cry, “But—that’s impossible! How did he cut away at our soul skill!?”

“Be careful!”

In the midst of Su Xia’s indignant shout, Tang Ya suddenly pushed him out of the way before shortly kicking himself to the other side.

Not too long after Tang Ya pushed himself away, a brilliant gleam of red light burst from the smoke along with a golden rope.

“Thwock!”

As soon as Tang Ya and Su Xia managed to get away, the Fire-tipped Spear landed right where the two used to be standing. Before they could even let out a sigh of relief, the Fire-tipped Spear let out a crimson light from its spot in the earth!

An explosion rang through the air, spilling elemental fire in a circle.

+10, effect of the Fire-tipped Spear, activate!

Again and again, the surprises from Bai Yunfei never stopped coming. Tang Ya and Su Xia hadn’t realized that Bai Yunfei would be this strong.

Even though they were at the edge of the explosion’s radius, the two of them were still caught in it, enough to cause them to stagger away in pain.

The fact that the Fire-tipped Spear activated an effect was something even Bai Yunfei hadn’t expected, but he wasn’t thrown into disarray like the other two. He immediately moved to capitalize on this chance. Yanking his hand back, the Compliant

Rope that was tied around the Fire-tipped Spear contracted in length, forcing the spear to come flying back. With the spear back in his hand, Bai Yunfei flew toward Tang Ya.

.....

Su Xia felt shocked really. Never in the world had he ever thought, that even with the advantage of numbers against a weaker Soul Sprite, they'd be on the losing end! The blade in his right hand moved tirelessly to defend himself against Bai Yunfei's assault. Bit by bit, he was being forced back by Bai Yunfei, and after ten meters or so, he was just about to launch an attack of his own when, all of a sudden, something to his left caused him to turn his head.

Just a few dozen meters away, a shadowy cat-like figure swung down from a tree to take Xiao Fang away when no one was looking—it was Zhu Zi!

While Tang Ya and Su Xia were completely engrossed in battle, Xiao Fang was successfully rescued!

In truth, Xiao Fang as a ‘hostage’ was practically useless for them. Not once did they think that she'd be a useful bargaining chip for Bai Yunfei to obediently hand over his soul armaments. If anything, she was bait to draw Bai Yunfei out and nothing more, so it didn't really matter to them whether Xiao Fang was rescued or not.

However, something about this rescue attempt made Su Xia think twice. His beady little eyes swiveled furiously as if he was thinking about something, and then a strange smile greeted his lips. “You trying to be the hero!? Forget about it! A commoner as insignificant as you should just die!”

No sooner did he finish speaking then his hand swung letting his blade fly from his grip. Since Xiao Fang was perched on top of the tree branch, she had nowhere to escape to!

It was intentional that he had spoke out loud, for good reason too. It was all for the sake of drawing Bai Yunfei's attention away from Tang Ya.

Even if Bai Yunfei wasn't distracted, Tang Ya could manipulate the blade so that it'd hit Bai Yunfei, or kill the inconsequential 'commoner' Xiao Fang. Her death wouldn't be anything to worry about in any case.

"Bastard!!"

As expected, Bai Yunfei immediately gave up his assault on Tang Ya when he saw that he was attacking Xiao Fang. He wouldn't be in time to chase down the blade, but Bai Yunfei instead threw his spear to his left hand and shook his right hand to throw the Glacial Pricker, intending to block Tang Ya's attack. Successfully managing to throw the blade, Bai Yunfei felt an immediate gale of wind blow against the back of his head. Tang Ya had managed to take advantage of the situation to aim the sharp blade of his weapon against his head!

In imminent peril, Bai Yunfei averted his head so that the blade would strike his right shoulder. There was a spark, and then the Goldsilk Armor split apart where the sharp metal cut it. Blood could be seen spilling out from where Bai Yunfei's flesh had been pierced.

Even the Glacial Piercer that he threw was unable to completely stop the thrown blade. At most, it only managed to slightly deviate its trajectory...

Then came pain. Pain in the abdomen from where Tang Ya managed to land a kick on Bai Yunfei after seeing his blade miss its mark. Even as he was sent flying away with blood coursing down his shoulder, Bai Yunfei didn't seem to feel the pain. His eyes were instead staring in despair at the blade; if it killed Xiao Fang, he'd never be able to live with that guilt!

The blade seemed as if its rotational arc would slice across Xiao

Fang's throat at any second, penultimately ending her life, but the shadow of someone's figure moved right in front of her with arms out—it was Zhu Zi!

“Tzk!”

A spray of bloody mist erupted from Zhu Zi's chest. Under Tang Ya's control, the culprit was brought flying back toward him. Following a mouthful of blood, Zhu Zi collapsed by the side of the teary-eyed Xiao Fang...

.....

Having been kicked back by Tang Ya earlier, Bai Yunfei's body finally managed to make contact with the ground. Rolling onto his feet with just enough momentum to have his bent knees slide on the ground, Bai Yunfei slammed his right arm down to halt his backwards momentum.

“Fwomph!”

A burst of fire exploded from his right arm and channeled its way through his palm, scorching the ground. With the flames spreading rapidly, the area near Bai Yunfei's body soon went up in flames. Neither his hair nor clothes were touched in the slightest, but the intense flames fed from his soulforce were so great that the air around him started to haze and twist quite clearly.

Just slowly, Bai Yunfei's head tilted up to glare at both Tang Ya and Su Xia. With the flames burning up around him, his eyes seemed to have gained a bit of fire to fuel his justified indignation.

“You've done it now... you've really angered me... damn you two!!”

The sudden change that overcame Bai Yunfei left Tang Ya and Su Xia in a daze for a brief moment, but they considered the facts. Bai Yunfei's right shoulder was still heavily bleeding, and he wasn't in a good state. The tides of battle were finally leaning toward them, so being intimidated by Bai Yunfei wasn't too likely.

"Hmph! So you'd feel angry even over the life of an ant! What a ridiculously silly display of empathy! What is the point of your anger? You're on a deathbed of your own after all!" Su Xia ridiculed.

Heaving his blade up with a green light surrounding it, he swung it at Bai Yunfei. The light that had been surrounding his blade elevated its speed so that it howled and whistled through the air.

Bai Yunfei circulated his soulforce to staunch the bleeding in his right shoulder while stabbing out with the spear in his left hand. Contesting with the blade of wind, the spear managed to overcome it.

Another gale of wind, this time from the left as Tang Ya lashed out.

Bai Yunfei snorted and withdrew his spear and moved aside so that the blade would pass over his head, and in that moment, Bai Yunfei swung his right arm out so that the golden Compliant Rope wrapped snugly around the hilt of Tang Ya's blade!

Startled, Su Xia urged more of his own soulforce into his blade so that it'd light up in a show of green light. At the same time, the other blade that was intertwined with the Compliant Rope began to violently shake as if it was being called back to Su Xia. With the rope pulled tight, Bai Yunfei's right arm started to flex from the exertion of pulling back at the rope. The wound on Bai Yunfei's shoulder reopened because of this exertion, but Bai Yunfei didn't possess the slightest idea to let go.

The blade continued to struggle ten meters in between Bai Yunfei and Su Xia. In this constant 'struggle,' the blade felt as if it were alive. Bai Yunfei was pulling back at it with his Compliant Rope, and Su Xia was still manipulating it somehow, leaving them in a stalemate.

A brilliant gleam of opportunity entered Tang Ya's eyes. His right arm shook once to retrieve a giant iron mace from his space ring.

While Bai Yunfei was stuck in this game of ‘tug-o’war’ with Su Xia, he hoisted it up high to smash it down on Bai Yunfei!

Chapter 175: The Surprise Attack of Shao Ling

This bronze mace wasn't any ordinary mace; there was an orange light radiating from its head—it was a human-tier soul item!

Bai Yunfei's eyes dilated as they registered the incoming bronze mace. His hand continued to maintain a tight grip on the Compliant Rope, but his lower body shifted slightly so that he could stab out with the Fire-tipped Spear.

Ninefold Stab!

This was the very first time Bai Yunfei had used the Ninefold Stab despite being unable to bear the brunt of the backlash, and he used it with his left hand no less!

“Shnk!”

The sharp point of the spear made contact with the head of the mace, resulting in a metallic ringing sound, but the dazzling glow of crimson light that exploded forth from the spear was what really made Bai Yunfei's eyes light up!

“Boom!”

An earthshaking explosion shook the place, and right after that, the Fire-tipped Spear activated for a second time!

This was the very first time such an event had happened, where the Fire-tipped Spear's effect activated twice in a row!

Its resulting power was beyond even Bai Yunfei's calculations. That human-tier mace may as well have been made of paper due to how easily it was torn apart.

Tang Ya released the mace from his grip as soon as he felt the early signs of the strike, but his right hand was already reduced to a mangled piece of flesh. Not only that, but his body was sent another twenty meters back, thanks to the blast. Staggering to a

stop, the man spat out a mouthful of blood as he stared at Bai Yunfei in disbelief.

A series of cracks crawled up Bai Yunfei's arm before the blood within began to spill out. Even with the blood pouring out, Bai Yunfei barely spared it a glance. Instead, he studied the equally injured Tang Ya, "Shao Ling, now!!"

This sudden shout startled even Tang Ya. Cursing to himself, he whirled around just in time to see a straw-hat wearing youngster come darting out from the grass. He had been hiding in the grass before, but now, he was already right beside Tang Ya with a bright-red object in his hand—poised to strike.

It was Shao Ling!

The fact that a commoner would actually try to fight him was a completely unexpected factor in the battle. Tang Ya didn't even know what Shao Ling was holding in his hand, but he was already bringing his left arm up to instinctively protect himself.

"Pow!"

Impact.

There was a vibration and a skip in Tang Ya's heartbeat, but...

There was no follow up?

For just half a second, Tang Ya wasn't sure what to think. There was hardly a tickle from what Shao Ling used to hit him with. Almost instinctively, his left arm rose to smash Shao Ling's head with all the soulforce he could muster!

"Whoosh!"

Practically moments before his hand hit Shao Ling, his wrist suddenly felt constricted, and could move no more. Bai Yunfei had, at some point, given up on pulling the blade. He had changed targets with his Compliant Rope, targeting Tang Ya's wrist.

The valor that Shao Ling was displaying at this current moment

astonished even Bai Yunfei. Shao Ling was so scared that his legs were practically knocking together in fright, but he was still able to take advantage of the slight pause in Tang Ya's strike. Stubbornly, he swung the +13 upgraded brick in his hand, landing a second strike on him!

“Pow!”

Tang Ya was about to curse Shao Ling for such a ‘useless’ action when the brick slammed into his chest.

The following sensation Tang Ya felt could only be described as “senseless flight,” and during the next few seconds, an intense headache assaulted his head!

The first time he was hit, he was lucky enough not to trigger an effect, but the second time he was hit, he was blindsided with both the ‘hurling’ and ‘dizzying’ effects!

“Pfff!”

At some point in his confusion, the slight sound of perforation could be heard. By the time he heard it, Tang Ya realized that not only was he several meters away from Shao Ling, there was also a flash of red from where the now-bloody Fire-tipped Spear lashed out. And then...

Pain!

There was pain erupting from his throat, but after that feeling, nothing else could be felt...

At the end of it all, Bai Yunfei could be seen standing right beside Tang Ya. His hands tightly gripped the Fire-tipped Spear, and the spearpoint of his weapon could be seen piercing straight through Tang Ya's throat!

Bai Yunfei's eyes revealed a callous and cold glare. With a tug of his hands, the Fire-tipped Spear was pulled away.

Blood came spilling forth from the puncture wound, and Tang

Ya's corpse fell to the ground with a resounding crash. Both of his eyes were wide-open in death, but a hint of disbelief could be seen—the final dred of emotion he experienced while he was still alive.

"Brother!!"

Thanks to the fact that Bai Yunfei pulled his hand away—oh, that's not right.

Thanks to the fact that Bai Yunfei released the grasp of the Compliant Rope on Su Xia's blade, Su Xia was free to see the state of Tang Ya.

Shock was the only visible emotion on his face—never once did he think that his own brother would be killed in the blink of an eye!

"But how? But why!?" Su Xia blanked out.

However, the icy look Bai Yunfei gave him jolted him back to awareness, pushing away all his idle thoughts. An animalistic roar welled up within his mind, "He's too strong! I can't—I can't beat him! I have to run, or else I'll die!"

At the current moment, Bai Yunfei's arms were both a bloody mess. His left arm was practically devoid of feeling, and his right arm was only slightly better than the other. Now that he had recovered somewhat, Bai Yunfei stored away the Fire-tipped Spear and circulated the remaining soulforce he had into his arms. As hard as he might, Bai Yunfei was trying his best to recuperate his wounds while also giving Su Xia an evil glare.

In the beginning, there were two. One was killed, and now the other one would definitely not escape death!

He could see Su Xia was desperate to flee now.

Naturally, Bai Yunfei wouldn't give him the chance.

Snarling, Bai Yunfei circulated his soulforce to his feet and charged at Su Xia.

Like a beaten dog in the prairie, Su Xia didn't hesitate to turn around to flee. With the elemental wind aiding his feet, Su Xia wasn't any slower than Bai Yunfei as he ran off into the northern forest.

The sight of Su Xia trying to flee only elicited a snort from Bai Yunfei. Waving his right arm, the Compliant Rope slithered seventy meters away with the flexibility of a snake, coiling around the right foot of Su Xia.

The constriction of something around his right leg gave rise to an alarmed expression on Su Xia's face. The next second, a powerful tug immediately snapped his leg back and pulled him backwards. He fell the ground in practically no time at all.

However, he wasn't being dragged across the ground back toward Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei was contracting the length of the rope to bring him to Su Xia!

"Asshole, I'll kill you!" Frothing at the mouth, Su Xia's left arm swung out at Bai Yunfei to deliver a whistling strike.

Narrowing his eyes in concentration, Bai Yunfei chose to continue ahead and swung his left arm in front of his right.

As expected, when the blade scratched his waist, sparks began to fly as the Goldsilk Armor took another scratch to its plating.

Halfway through the slash, Bai Yunfei's eyebrows suddenly flew up with a joyous smile—

+10 Additional effect, activate!

(When attacked, there is a five percent chance of gaining an additional fifty percent of defense for three seconds)

The blade returned back to Su Xia's waiting hand, but upon seeing that Bai Yunfei was quickly coming to him, a frantic desperation began to arise within him. Without further ado, he

immediately combined the two blades in his left and right hand to form a single sword!

“Cling!” A metallic ring echoed upon attachment, but the two blade somehow managed to form a single larger blade!

Now that he had a blade in one hand, Su Xia made a furious chop at Bai Yunfei’s waist!

Bai Yunfei’s eyes shined bright with a calculative glint, “The Goldsilk Armor’s additional effect gives me more than six hundred points in defense during this time—I’ll take it!”

Set with a game plan, Bai Yunfei moved slightly to his right without slowing down at all. In a second, he was right beside Su Xia with his right arm glowing with a bright, red light as it prepared to take on the blade.

At the same time, the Flame Winged Blade was about to strike!

But... alas!

Just as the Flame Winged Dagger was about to fully materialize, Bai Yunfei’s face took on a darker shade, and the red light on his right arm darkened as well. The next second, all of his soulforce was sent to his left waist as if his life depended on it—and it did!

There was a sharp pain in that very location!

The additional effect of his Goldsilk Armor had indeed activated so that he had more than six hundred defense points, but Su Xia’s blade chopped through it as if there was nothing there to begin with!

Upon the blade cutting deep into his abdomen, a force of elemental wind was transmitted into his wounds. Combined with the sensation of pain and the elemental wind forcing its way in, Bai Yunfei’s entire body began to sweat heavily from the pain; it almost felt as if there were blades cutting away at his innards.

Doing his best to throw himself to the right, Bai Yunfei finally

felt the pain within his body start to somewhat subside, but the pain was enough for him to lose his balance. With a “plop,” he tumbled to the ground. Thanks to his momentum from the desperate evasion maneuver, it took several meters before he came to a stop.

“Im—impossible!!” Looking at the wound he had received, Bai Yunfei was slackjawed, “The strength of that blade had to have increased by at least half of what it was before! How in the world...”

The fact that Bai Yunfei was on the ground with a rapidly paling face and an equally rapidly bleeding wound, made Su Xia’s face reveal a wide grin following a brief period of shock.

“Hahaha! So you’ve run out of soulforce! You’re at the end of your rope, kid!!”

Chapter 176: Wiping Out the Enemies

Practically jeering, Su Xia gave a mocking laugh at Bai Yunfei, “What’s wrong? Surprised? Was the Crescent Moon Blade stronger than it was before? Haha! If you want to find out why, make sure my brother teaches you a good lesson about it when you reach him in the underworld!”

Filled with resentment, Su Xia stalked towards Bai Yunfei with one heavy step at a time. His blade glowed brightly with a light-green color and an aura that felt exceedingly chilly.

In no time at all, Su Xia stood above the limp-bodied Bai Yunfei with his blade held up high. With eyes that radiated with a near insane but lazy light, he howled, “Time to die!”

As soon as Su Xia’s blade came crescending downwards, Bai Yunfei lifted his head to cry out loud, “Shao Ling, now!”

These three words caused an immediate reaction. Su Xia’s blade came to a screeching stop while his own face blanched.

He remembered now!

It was because of these three words that his now deceased brother was ambushed and killed!

Thus, fear clouded his mind and judgement. Almost instinctively, Su Xia’s foot pushed off against the ground to whirl around with his blade to slice out at—

—absolutely nothing!

The blade tasted nothing but air, and for the life of him, Su Xia couldn’t see anyone no matter where he turned his head to.

“Fuck, I was tri—”

Barely a moment later, an even stronger amount of fear flooded his heart. Palefaced, Su Xia swung his head around just in time to see two bright eyes burning with a furious red....

“Pppfttt!”

A faint sizzling sound followed the slight stench of something burning—this was what Su Xia could hear and smell in his last moments to life.

A burn mark was etched deep into Su Xia’s body from his left shoulder to his right waist. While this burn mark was strongly burnt into his body, it hadn’t been thorough enough to completely bisect the man in half. But still, black-colored blood spilled out from the wound to amass beneath the wide-eyed Su Xia. Teetering on his feet for a slight moment, the man’s corpse then came collapsing onto the ground behind him with eyes glossed over.

On the other side, Bai Yunfei was half kneeling on the ground with his left hand pressed against his waist and his right hand on the ground. Right above his shoulder, a ball of flame slowly flickered out from sight....

Flame Winged Blade!

On his right forefinger, a black ring glistened slightly with a gradually dimming light.

Space Ring’s +10 additional effect:

Stockpile 300 soulpoints to be used whenever. This does not count towards the soulpoints within the body.

.....

“Whew...”

Falling to his butt, Bai Yunfei let out a drawn out sigh from relief. His entire body was wet with sweat, and the area around his waist was still bleeding quite heavily.

Several seconds passed in this fashion before Bai Yunfei finished absorbing all of the soulforce stockpiled in the space ring. Waving

his right hand, several spirit-increasing accessories dropped to the ground in front of him for him to wear. With those, Bai Yunfei's soulforce recovery would be accelerated, allowing for him to completely heal from his wounds in no time.

"Bro—brother Bai....are you okay?"

The quavering voice of Shao Ling made itself known to Bai Yunfei, prompting him to turn his head towards the source. Right there was the strawhat wearing, brick holding Shao Ling not too far away with a look of concern on his face.

"I'm fine, don't worry about me...." Bai Yunfei nodded his head before struggling back up to his feet. "Let's take a look at Zhu Zi and see what his wounds are."

"Ah! Brother Zhu Zi!" Shao Ling yelped; because of the high tension moment with Su Xia and the fact that Bai Yunfei had killed two men in a terrifyingly unforgettable fashion, Shao Ling had practically forgotten about Zhu Zi. So when Bai Yunfei mentioned Zhu Zi's name, Shao Ling remembered at last the situation and ran off to where Xiao Fang and Zhu Zi was.

Xiao Fang was completely still from on top of the tree perch she was on. The only thing that moved from her body was her constant flow of tears, making her seem more like a crying statue rather than a human as she beheld the blood-soaked figure of Zhu Zi by her side.

In contrast to her, Zhu Zi was completely soaked with blood. His mouth had a small rivulet of blood flowing from it, and his face was abnormally pale due to blood loss. His eyebrows were knitted together in a clear sign of the pain he was in.

But at the very least; he was alive! The Crescent Moon Blade had only cut at his chest rather than killing him!

Approaching Zhu Zi's body, Bai Yunfei knelt down and checked for a pulse. After confirming there was no life-threatening

wounds, Bai Yunfei felt all of his concerns drain away.

Taking out several strength-increasing accessories, he ordered Shao Ling to help put them on Zhu Zi. Whatever reason why Bai Yunfei wanted this, Shao Ling didn't know, but he knew better than to ask and swiftly did as Bai Yunfei said.

This attribute 'strength', as it was known on the accessories, had many categorizations. 'Energy', 'endurance', 'instantaneous power', and even 'rate of recovery'. For the common person, it could increase their physical strength and boost all of the abovementioned factors. This meant that with all of these accessories worn, Zhu Zi would find himself recovering very quickly.

Putting one hand on one seam of Zhu Zi's clothing and the other hand some distance apart, Bai Yunfei ripped at his clothes so as to reveal the bisected Heart Protecting Mirror. This was the soul armament with a hole that Bai Yunfei taken from one of the members of the Beast Taming School.

Prior to the entire battle, Bai Yunfei instructed the two males to hide far away and wait for when the battle started in order to find an opportunity. It was a gamble, but it paid off when Bai Yunfei figured that it'd be best to give Zhu Zi the soul armament after seeing how worried the male was for Xiao Fang.

In the end, Su Xia ended up finding out about their plan and delivered a swift chop at Zhu Zi in hopes of killing him. If not for Bai Yunfei giving him the item, Zhu Zi would've had no chance at living at all.

But even with the Heart Protecting Mirror, the wound Zhu Zi sustained was deep enough to see bone, and even his internal organs could almost be seen peaking out behind his skin.

For Shao Ling, Bai Yunfei entrusted him with the Walk-on Strawhat and the +13 brick. Originally, Bai Yunfei didn't plan on having Shao Ling help out at all. But the battle was far more

intense than he thought and Shao Ling was more than willing to do his part to help kill Tang Ya before indirectly helping tie up the final battle.

Untying Xiao Fang from her confines, Bai Yunfei handed her some first-aid equipment so she could treat Zhu Zi. Then, Bai Yunfei spoke several more words before sitting back down to focus on recovering his own wounds.

Nightfell came before Bai Yunfei finally let out a long exhale. Opening his eyes, he took notice that the wounds on his waist and right shoulder were all but healed. His left arm still hurt something fierce, but it was nothing unmanageable.

The sight of Shao Ling and Xiao Fang guarding Zhu Zi's body greeted Bai Yunfei upon first glance. Neither of the two dared to say anything the entire time in fear that they would bother him.

Realizing that Bai Yunfei was 'awake', Shao Ling immediately let out a question, "Brother Bai, are you okay now?"

Smiling, Bai Yunfei spoke, "Ah, I'm fine. You can relax now."

"Lo—lord Bai.....thank you for saving me....." Xiao Fang's voice was faint and her face was haggard. After experiencing the events she did today and the unforgettable battle that took place for her, the delicate young woman had her fair share of lingering fears.

Rather than feeling happy about being thanked, Bai Yunfei felt guilty. It was because of him that this situation happened. If he wasn't here, then Xiao Fang and the other two wouldn't have been in danger to begin with.

"Miss Xiao Fang, there's no need for that. If anything, I should be the one apologizing to you. Everything was because of me after all...." Bai Yunfei nodded to Zhu Zi, "But you don't need to be that concerned. Zhu Zi is fine, I can guarantee that in three days, he'll be back to normal."

"Really? But...his wounds are so serious...." For a moment, Xiao

Fang's lit up before frowning again.

"Sis, haven't you realized that brother Bai isn't any ordinary person? He's amazing! If he says so, then it has to be true!" Shao Ling spoke with reinvigorated enthusiasm.

Using his soulforce to aid in Zhu Zi's recovery, Bai Yunfei had the wounds on his chest healed up in practically no time at all before taking a small break. Stepping away to let Xiao Fang and Shao Ling look at him, Bai Yunfei turned his head to look around the place.

The entire place around them was practically a wasteland with scars of battle to be seen everywhere. Tang Ya and Su Xia's space rings were quickly confiscated by Bai Yunfei before the Crescent Moon Blades were taken as well. From there, Bai Yunfei burnt their bodies to ashes and let it scatter away into the winds to hide the evidence.

Chapter 177: A Profitable Inventory

Zhu Zi finally came around not too long afterwards, allowing the four to travel back towards the village before dusk. Under Bai Yunfei's warning, the group decided to make up the lie that they had been attacked by ferocious beasts while gathering in the forests. In order to protect everyone, Zhu Zi had fought off the beasts, but he ended up getting wounded in the process. After Zhu Zi was sent back home to rest, Bai Yunfei and the other two walked back to their own homes.

Besides trying his best to heal from his wounds, Bai Yunfei had no other plans for the meanwhile. It took two days for his wounds to completely heal, and Bai Yunfei was pleasantly surprised to see that after the intense battle he took part in, he had gained a decent boost in strength. As it seemed, pressure and environment was the fastest way to grow stronger. Naturally, he wouldn't abandon the Upgrading Technique either.

On the third night, Bai Yunfei finally found the time to take a look at the profits he gained from the battle...

The first thing that came to hand were two crystals. One orange crystal and one light-green crystal specifically, making Bai Yunfei furrow his eyebrows together to think.

"Hold on....the scorpion was killed by them! With their strength, they had to have waited for the scorpion to return before they sprung their trap....agh."

Sighing, Bai Yunfei stored away the soul crystals and took out the next item; a light-green plant about the size of his palm with two stalks. They were connected to one another by means of two circular "lids" like some sort of freakish mushroom; but the most curious thing about this was the fact that they seemed to be still moving! (Like a propeller).

As soon as this plant was taken out, a rich amount of elemental

wind began to pervade the room with so much of it that the entire room began to feel even more ventilated than before.

This was the treasure that Su Xia and Tang Ya stole from the scorpion way back in the cave—the thousand-year-old windshroom.

“This....has to be the treasure the scorpion was guarding. When those two took it, the scorpion nearly killed me for it, and now, it’s back into my hands now....” Bai Yunfei sighed. Thinking about everything that happened and how he had been exploited for the personal profit of another, Bai Yunfei felt a tremendous pain in his head. But still, the fact that this annoyance was solved like so, he felt a nice sense of ‘vengeance’.

Moving on from the subject with a sigh, Bai Yunfei put away the windshroom as well to move onto his next ‘spoils of war’. What came next was quite the shocking discovery—besides from some money and a few miscellaneous stuff; there were a few low-grade soul crystals and primal stones. Though there were no soul skills, there were well over twenty soul armaments!

They were mainly human tier soul armaments—and very low quality ones at that—but there were still a few middle-grade and high-grade versions as well.

Of course, this excluded the Crescent Moon Blades.

Equipment Grade: High Rare

Defense: 431

Upgrade Requirement: 77 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei’s eyes sparkled as he beheld the flexible yellow armor in front of him. “A defensive soul item, and it’s armor too! Jackpot!”

It was a legitimate concern for Bai Yunfei to find a new set of

armor to replace his Goldsilk Armor. Finding one even better than that was difficult, but then all of a sudden; he found a new set of armor that was two tiers higher than it! Not only that, but this armor was made from material similar to rattan vines from trees, making it soft and flexible while also providing even more defense than the Goldsilk Armor.

The Goldsilk Armor was already devastatingly damaged and wasn't too far away from being completely useless. If he could find a set of armor to replace it, that'd be a great stroke of luck for Bai Yunfei.

"Let's try upgrading it to +10 then...." Bai Yunfei thought.

A moment later.

Upgrade successful

Equipment Grade: High Rare

Upgrade Level: +10 Defense: 431

Additional Defense: 225

+10 Additional Effect: Accelerate the body's recovery rate by 10%

Upgrade Requirement: 77 Soulpoints

An eyebrow was raised at the effect. "Accelerate the body's recovery rate? Another never before seen effect!"

Following a period of silent debate, Bai Yunfei's lips curled upwards to form a smile. "Accelerated healing speed....this is an incredible effect! It's far better than something activated based on a percentage. If I had only tried upgrading this before, I wouldn't even need those past two days to heal...."

Taking off the beaten and battered Goldsilk Armor from beneath his clothes, Bai Yunfei exchanged it for this newer soft armor. Taking it for a spin, Bai Yunfei moved around to demonstrate the

mobility with it worn. Satisfied in the fact that there was nothing strange to be felt while wearing this armor, Bai Yunfei nodded his head and looked to the battered Goldsilk Armor. “Thank you for always protecting me in the past. You can rest now....”

With the Goldsilk Armor stored away in safety, Bai Yunfei took out the next soul armament to be upgraded. This time, it was a two-handed hatchet weighing about fifty kilograms.

Equipment Grade: Middle Rare

Attack: 366

Upgrade Requirement: 72 Soulpoints

“A hatchet....” Bai Yunfei thought rather regretfully, “This is useless for me. I’ll give it a try though.”

One period of upgrading later....

Equipment Grade: Middle Rare

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 366

Additional Attack: 175

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 7% chance of inflicting knockback.

Upgrade Requirement: 72 Soulpoints

“Knockback....” He was disappointed at this extremely lackluster effect. There was once a blade he upgraded in the past that had the same ‘knockback’ effect; but it was only a normal item with a 3% chance to do so. Having a rare soul armament having a 7% chance really did feel too subpar to be of use.

“But....the strength of knockback should be stronger than the other one.” Bai Yunfei guessed.

Since he had no desire in trying to test out the effects of this

hatchet, Bai Yunfei put the item away into his space ring and took out another soul armament to inspect and upgrade.

Equipment Grade: Low Rare

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 229

Additional Attack: 115

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 4% chance of increasing attack by 100 points.

Upgrade Requirement: 62 Soulpoints

—A short sword with a mediocre effect.

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Rare

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 237

Additional Attack: 121

+10 Additional Effect: Add an additional 51 points of attack when attacking.

Upgrade Requirement: 63 Soulpoints

—A hook-like soul armament with yet another mediocre effect.

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Rare

Upgrade Level: +10

Defense: 217

Additional Defense: 99

+10 Additional Effect: 4% chance of reflecting a portion of the damage when blocking.

Upgrade Requirement: 61 Soulpoints

—A shield about the size of a washbasin. A strong effect, but a weak probability.

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Rare

Upgrade Level: +10 Defense....

“.....”

.....

It took two resting periods for Bai Yunfei to go through his complete set of low-rare items (Many of them being human-tier) to +10. Each and every single one of them had very disappointing effects, and the only one that had surprised him to some degree was the soft armor which had been the very first thing he upgraded to begin with. Aside from that, nothing else caught his eye. In fact, there were some soul armaments with additional effects that were even worse than the incomplete soul armament had.

“The ‘quality’ of these items are rather lacking...” Pulling out a claw type soul armament with a shake of his head, he was already in the middle of convincing himself that making these soul armaments as a trump card was a lost cause. To wish for so now was a lost cause.

One rest and several sighs later, Bai Yunfei straightened his back.
“Next up are the most important ones....”

Following a shake and twist of his hand, the Crescent Moon Blades came popping into his hands in a flash of greenish light—these two blades were separate, but could also be used as one as if they were meant to be so to begin with.

With his heart pounding in his chest, Bai Yunfei began to look

through the stats of the soul armament.

Equipment Grade: Low Legacy

Equipment Set: Left

Attack: 630

Set Effect 1: Freely manipulate the [Right] piece if within 100 meters.

Set Effect 2: If combined with the other piece, increase the equipment grade to Middle Legacy with an attack of 998.

Upgrade Requirement: 83 Soulpoints

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Legacy

Equipment Set: Right

Attack: 641 Set Effect 1: Freely manipulate the [Left] piece if within 100 meters.

Set Effect 2: If combined with the other piece, increase the equipment grade to Middle Legacy with an attack of 998.

Upgrade Requirement: 83 Soulpoints

.....

Chapter 178: Crescent Moon Blades and Set Equipment!

For the longest of time, Bai Yunfei was gobsmacked. Wide-eyed and open-mouthed, Bai Yunfei simply could not believe his eyes for several seconds.

“Se—set equipment!” Bai Yunfei’s heart began to pound against his chest in joy, “A set of left and right. Set equipment....they’re strong!”

Taking several seconds to inhale and exhale, Bai Yunfei calmed himself down before taking a second look at the Crescent Moon Blades.

“Yet again another discovery, but what a find this is! No wonder those two were fighting so strangely! That one time I almost died was because of the set equipment’s effect!”

“Right now in this current state they’re considered a set of left and right, but how do I split them apart?” Bai Yunfei stared inquisitively at the soul armament in his hand. Turning it around, Bai Yunfei tilted his head to look at the hilt of the blade. Following a stream of his soulforce, the blade then immediately split apart from one another.

“Ka-chink!”

There was a metallic crack.

And then there was a single blade in both of Bai Yunfei’s hands.

“They split!” Bai Yunfei cracked a grin at the sight of these two weapons. Now he could take a better look at the two.

Weighing each sword in his hand, Bai Yunfei began to mutter to himself, “A set of soul armament where the left and right pieces are connected. What happens if I....if I upgrade them?”

Curious on the results, Bai Yunfei made the swift decision to

immediately upgrade these to +10.

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Legacy

Equipment Set: Left

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 630

Additional Attack: 327

Set Effect 1: Freely Manipulate the [Right] piece if within 100 meters.

Set Effect 1: If combined with the other piece, increase the equipment grade to Middle Legacy with an attack of 998 and an additional attack of 411.

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 10% chance to conjure a single blade of wind.

If the [Left] and [Right] pieces are together, increase this chance to 15% to summon three wind blades.

(If attacking the head, the chance of stunning increases to 5%)

Upgrade Requirement: 83 Soulpoints

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Legacy

Equipment Set: Right

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 641

Additional Attack: 332

Set Effect 1: Freely Manipulate the [Left] piece if within 100 meters.

Set Effect 1: If combined with the other piece, increase the equipment grade to Middle Legacy with an attack of 998 and an additional attack of 411.

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 10% chance to conjure a single blade of wind.

If the [Left] and [Right] pieces are together, increase this chance to 15% to summon three wind blades.

(If attacking the head, the chance of stunning increases to 5%)

Upgrade Requirement: 83 Soulpoints

.....

“Wind blade....isn’t that pretty much the same thing as the Flame Winged Blade? How strong would it be then....” Looking at the improved weapon in his hand, Bai Yunfei started to think to himself. “But when the two blades are connected, they become a....an earth-tier item!” That’s already stronger than the +12 Fire-tipped Spear!”

“Not bad at all then! Too bad I’m not good at this type of weapon, I’d love to use it!” Bai Yunfei sighed, “But still, using it every so often for a sneak attack should be a trump card still....”

He had no way of trying out the Crescent Moon Blades, so all he could really do was to ‘play’ around with them before putting them away again.

With nothing else to inspect and with it being the dead of the night, Bai Yunfei’s only option afterwards was to sit back on his bed and try his best to cultivate.

.....

The next day, Bai Yunfei finished up his cultivation period and finished some breakfast before heading out for the mountains himself. Shao Ling had been refused to go with him.

It was in these forests that Bai Yunfei gained some valuable experience with the Crescent Moon Blades and the other newly acquired soul armament. The Crescent Moon Blades’ +10 effect and additional effects were studied especially carefully.

Contrary to his initial thought, the Crescent Moon Blades weren’t as nearly hard as he’d thought they’d be. All he needed to do was to transmit some soulforce into it and he could manipulate their movements as freely as he’d like within a hundred meters of himself. It wasn’t a drastic consumption, but the further the blades traveled away from him, the more soulforce it took.

The weapons had the chance of summoning a wind blade of

considerable strength. It didn't have the explosive effect like the Fire-tipped Spear did, but it was still quite decent. The Fire-tipped Spear required a 'stab' in order to activate, the Crescent Moon Blades only required a swing to activate. Even if he missed, it'd still work! The swing of the actual blade and the wind blade could work in conjunction with one another. But the true extent of their power couldn't exactly be determined without a test run in battle first.

After his experiment finished, Bai Yunfei began to work on improving his own fighting habits and skills such as the Wave Treading Steps, the Ninefold Fist Force, the throwing knives, and so forth. Whether it was finding a flaw in his defenses or just improving his skills in general, Bai Yunfei was trying his best so that he could grow strong enough to fight off anyone.

From morning to noon, Bai Yunfei didn't bother to return to the village at all.

And so when he finally followed the river back to the village in a mid-thought walk, Bai Yunfei was surprised to see two sitting shoulder to shoulder underneath a large tree on the other side of the river.

It was Xiao Fang and Zhu Zi.

And from the looks of it, they were rather close to one another and spoke in quiet voices. From where Bai Yunfei was, he could see Zhu Zi's left hand drift hesitantly back and forth towards Xiao Fang's shoulder as if he was having misgivings on holding onto her.

It was apparent to see that they weren't paying attention to their surroundings, so it was no wonder Bai Yunfei was able to go as far as he did without detection. It was only when the thickets rustled behind the two that they looked up and behind.

From Bai Yunfei's own response, it looked as if he realized that he had disturbed their moment. Sheepishly, he spoke,

“Oh....hehehe...what a coincidence. I didn’t think to come across you two here....”

“Lo—lord Bai, how did you come across here....?” Scrambling to her feet, Xiao Fang’s eyes flickered to Zhu Zi right next to her before blushing.

“Ehhhhh....I was just taking a walk. Carry on, I’ll be on my way now.”

Turning around, Bai Yunfei was about to walk away when Zhu Zi cried out after him. “Bai Yunfei, hold on!”

“Eh? What’s up?” Bai Yunfei asked in confusion.

Hesitating at first, Zhu Zi turned to look at Xiao Fang, “Xiao Fang, could you go on back first? I want to talk with Bai Yunfei.”

Although she was confused as well, Xiao Fang didn’t question him and gave an obedient nod of her head. “Okay. It’s noon anyways, I needed to go on back to fix lunch anyways....”

The two watched Xiao Fang draw farther and farther away before Bai Yunfei looked to the still hesitant Zhu Zi. Smiling, he spoke, “Zhu Zi, what’d you want to say to me? From what I can see, you’ve made a huge step in your relationship with Xiao Fang! Don’t tell me you still think I’m an enemy?”

Zhu Zi was taken aback himself at first. Shaking his head as if to clear away the misunderstandings, he spoke apologetically. “Tha—no, I wanted apologize to you for before. I was being jealous and thought that you were....”

“Haha, don’t sweat the small stuff then. How’re your wounds?” Bai Yunfei laughed. He spent the last two days healing from his wounds so he had barely seen Shao Ling, let alone Zhu Zi who was in an even worse of a state. From the looks of things, Zhu Zi was obviously in a much better state than before.

Nodding, Zhu Zi replied, “I made a complete recovery yesterday night. I....I heard from Xiao Fang that it was because of you that I

was able to recover so fast. I wanted to thank you and....and to give you this.”

A single sack was taken out from within Zhu Zi’s robes. From it, he took out a series of accessories—the ones Bai Yunfei had first given to him to help accelerate his wounds.

Seeing the reluctant look on Zhu Zi’s face, Bai Yunfei just had to smile. He could remember when Jing Mingfeng had been loaned the speed enhancing accessories, and how he was reluctant to give it back as well. But the smile receded soon enough, he simply couldn’t give Zhu Zi these items to own. It was only because Zhu Zi was in a bad enough state that the very best recovery items were used. He couldn’t gift these upgraded items away, no matter how decent of a fellow Zhu Zi was.

But there was still something else Zhu Zi looked like he wanted to say as he returned the accessories, prompting Bai Yunfei to ask, “What, is there something else?”

Bowing his head, Zhu Zi’s eyes gleamed with a slight indecisive light before quickly being overshadowed by a firm one. A moment later, Zhu Zi took out another bag from his robe and opened it to reveal a small white stone the size of a small fist.

Turning it over and giving to Bai Yunfei, Zhu Zi had a pained look on his face. “I give this to you. This is for saving Xiao Fang’s life!”

Chapter 179: Upgrade Stone

Turning it over and giving to Bai Yunfei, Zhu Zi had a pained look on his face. “I give this to you. This is for saving Xiao Fang’s life!”

“Eh? What’s this?” Bai Yunfei asked in confusion.

“It’s thanks for saving Xiao Fang and me.”

Waving his hand, Bai Yunfei spoke, “What are you talking about, it was because of me that you three got in trouble to begin with. It should be me that should be apologizing to you. What’s the need for this then?”

But Zhu Zi’s hand remained still in the air. “It was because of the disk you gave me that my life was spared. And it was because of that act of courage that Xiao Fang was finally able to see it and my determination. She has....she has accepted me. So, I—I wanted to thank you!”

“Err—she did...?” Bai Yunfei had never expected to see that he had actually ‘helped’ Zhu Zi’s chase after Xiao Fang. “People always say that ‘if there’s a will, there’s a way’. There’s no need to thank me like this...”

“I need to thank you, if I don’t, I’d never be able to let it go.” Zhu Zi pressed on. “This is a strange stone. It’s the reason why my body is so strong. But even now, I’ve no use for it, and there’s no point in keeping it. I know you aren’t any ordinary person, so if I give it to you, you should be able to find an even better use for it.”

Rendered speechless by the determination of Zhu Zi, Bai Yunfei took a look at the stone handed to him. It was pulsating with the faint wisps of worldly energy, but traces of an elementless energy could be felt (coincidentally the most perfect type of energy any soul cultivator can absorb). It wasn’t high in quality, and at the very best, it could probably be classified as a low-grade primal

stone.

To the eyes of the commoner, a primal stone would be an absolute treasure for them. As long as it was on their body for an extended period of time, they could make use of the primal energy to strengthen their bodies. It appeared that Zhu Zi had been using that energy to become as strong as he was now to be one of the strongest commoners around.

Whilst Bai Yunfei was still thinking about the stone, Zhu Zi had already pressed the stone into his hands, “In short, this is my thanks!”

“But really, you don...” Bai Yunfei had wanted to say something more about the stone when something out of the corner of his eyes caused the words waiting to come out from his mouth to immediately die out there.

The reason for his loss of composure was due to the fact that a string of information was immediately sent to his head about the stone....

Equipment Grade: Unique

Effect: Increase the chance of success when upgrading.

Cannot be upgraded.

.....

Increase the chance of success when upgrading!

Increase the chance of success when upgrading!!

Increase the chance of success when upgrading!!!

Increase...

“.....”

This string of information swam around Bai Yunfei's head, rendering him speechless as if his spirit had left him.

The drastic change that overcame Bai Yunfei caused even Zhu Zi to feel alarmed, “Bai Yunfei, wh—what happened?!”

From head to toe, Bai Yunfei's body began to shake. With a strange expression, Bai Yunfei managed to speak, “Er, nothing. Nothing really. I just didn't expect something like this....”

Looking back down onto the stone, Bai Yunfei grew quiet.

“Then, I'll accept this stone. Zhu Zi, thank you.” He managed to say.

Smiling honestly, Zhu Zi spoke, “This is my gift of thanks to you, why are you thanking me? I've said it already. This thing has no use anymore, so I wanted to give it to you. I hope that you'll be able to find a good use for it soon.”

“Yes, yes. I'll definitely be able to find a good use for it....Haha. Zhu Zi, yo—you're amazing!” Bai Yunfei let out a mental sigh of relief. He wanted nothing more but to hug Zhu Zi in this moment —don't misconstrue this action to be something else—but really, this was simply far too amazing to be true!

With the stone tucked carefully away, Bai Yunfei hesitated for a moment before shaking his right arm to take out a set of strength increasing accessories. Handing it to Zhu Zi, he spoke, “You should know what these are. I'll give them to you. There's also a set of earrings, you can give that to Xiao Fang. I'm sure she'll love it.”

“I.....” Zhu Zi wanted to refuse the gifts at first, but in truth, he had a great desire for these strange accessories, and so there was hesitation to be had.

“No need to refuse them. Take it. They're not important to me in

any case.” Bai Yunfei pushed the items onto Zhu Zi’s hands before continuing to speak, “They’re extremely unique items, so it’s best if you don’t let other people know about them so easily. It might give you unwanted trouble.”

Putting away the accessories, Zhu Zi spoke back to Bai Yunfei with a look of excitement, “Yes, I’ll be sure to keep that in mind!”

Thinking for another moment, Bai Yunfei felt that this deal was still quite lacking on his side of the deal. With another shake of his hand, a machete-like weapon about two-thirds of a meter long came out—it was the human-tier weapon Zhao Chuan had used to try and kill him from before.

Equipment Grade: Middle Rare

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 337

Additional Attack: 155

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is an 8% chance of inflicting another 100 points of damage.

Upgrade Requirement: 70 Soulpoints

Sparing it a single look over, Bai Yunfei handed the +10 human-tier weapon to Zhu Zi, “I’ll be giving this to you!”

“....”

Zhu Zi simply didn’t understand what in the world was going on. He was just giving Bai Yunfei a thank you gift for saving Xiao Fang a moment ago, but now he was being given something in return!

He was speechless towards Bai Yunfei, but the fact that Bai Yunfei could ‘bring’ out so many things from nowhere wasn’t what he was really shocked about. A few days ago, he had been lucky enough to bear witness to an ‘inconceivable’ fight after all.

Seeing the look of disbelief on Zhu Zi’s face, Bai Yunfei laughed

in response. “Don’t be like that. Honestly, the stone you gave me doesn’t have much use for you, but for me, it’s undeniably a priceless treasure. If I don’t give you something in return, I’d never be able to feel at ease with myself.”

Still not quite understanding the situation, Zhu Zi took the weapon into his own hand and then gave it an experimental chop onto the nearby tree. With a resounding “thwock”, the blade left a wrist-sized cut on the tree, causing it to break and fall onto the ground.

Unable to stop himself from smiling at Zhu Zi’s dumbstruck expression, Bai Yunfei spoke, “As you can tell, this blade is quite amazing. If you use it when you’re hunting, you shouldn’t be able to come across any danger. If you’re using the items I gave you and this blade, you might sometimes feel a sense of dizziness. Don’t be afraid, you’ll find that your blade will become sharper than usual during that time. If it happens several times in a row, a good rest should take care of that. But still, don’t let anyone else know about the secret behind this blade, otherwise, someone will surely try to kill you for it. Got it?”

.....

Afterwards, Bai Yunfei returned to the village with the still giddy-feeling Zhu Zi. Slapping him on the shoulder, Bai Yunfei returned to Shao Ling’s house by himself. Although he looked calm on the surface, Bai Yunfei was actually far more giddy than Zhu Zi was. He was just doing his best to restrain his emotions from showing up on it.

When it came to the Upgrade Technique of Bai Yunfei, what exactly was the biggest source of his headaches? It wasn’t the fear of not having any strong items to upgrade, it was the fear of the probabilities of success when upgrading!

It was fine if an incomplete soul armament blew up. He’d shed no tears over those.

But the super strong soul armaments that were already +10 like the Glacial Pricker, the Compliant Rope, the +11 Fire-tipped Spear, and the +12 Flameblade Bracer. Never would he dare try upgrading any of those any more than what it was right now, the results didn't outweigh the risks!

According to his understanding of the Upgrade Technique, the chance of a successful upgrade past the +10 mark was pitifully low. If he were to try and upgrade all of his current equipment, he wouldn't even be left with a third of it all. The loss of all those items would undoubtedly leave such a tremendous pain on Bai Yunfei he'd collapse against the wall if it were to happen.

It was a constant dream for him to hope that there would be some sort of method to increase the odds of success. For that reason, he took great pains to try and experiment each and every way he could to find a way. But until now, there had been no success at all.

But today!

Today a meatpie had fallen from the heavens!

Bai Yunfei had initially thought it was merely just a low-grade primal stone, but it was actually a unique object that could help him increase the chance of upgrading successfully!

How could he not be happy about that?

For the entire afternoon, Bai Yunfei was in a state of shock. Absent-mindedly, he followed Shao Ling to the mountains to hunt some prey until nightfall. Now that he was calm, Bai Yunfei immediately headed out of the village to reach the forests so that he was alone.

Sitting on the grass, Bai Yunfei took out the stone. It was pulsating just slightly, but it looked like any other ordinary white stone, causing Bai Yunfei to look even harder at it.

“So. Should I use it or not?”

Chapter 180: Upgrading in Batches

Now that the upgrade stone was in his hand, Bai Yunfei was wavering on the decision on if he should use it or not.

Before this, he was extremely excited to finally find a way to increase the chance of a successful upgrade. But now that the moment was here to put it to the test, Bai Yunfei found himself faced with another dilemma, hence his hesitation.

“But just how much will the chances improve by? 1%? 10%? Or maybe 50%? Who knows? Damn it, this is far too vague! Can’t they explain it a little better?!” Bai Yunfei stared hard at the upgrade stone’s attributes again, only to receive the notification of ‘Increases the chance of success when upgrading’ again.

“Ugh! If it’s like that, there’s no way I’d be able to upgrade whatever I want...” Bai Yunfei’s hands clutched at the Glacial Pricker and the upgrade stone in indecision. Finally, he put down both hands and sighed. “I don’t even know the concrete details, how am I supposed to make a decision like this! Should I use an unimportant soul armament and try it out? But how many times can I use this stone...I’ve only one of these. If it disappears, I’d regret this for my entire life!”

Worrying about the gains and losses for practically half an hour, Bai Yunfei finally decided that it’d be best to not use it for now. Storing it away with a shake of his head, he thought, “I’ll keep it for now. At the very least I know it’s a very unique item. There definitely has to be more of these things. If there’s a chance to get even more, then maybe when I reach the Crafting School, I’ll be able to research these things even more....”

Author Note: In truth, this item should be considered a ‘Special Item’ since it’s related to the Equipment Upgrade Technique.

“Ah. I should ask Zhu Zi where he found this stone in fact. After all of the excitement this afternoon, I completely forgot to ask.

Maybe there'll be even more of them!" Bai Yunfei scratched his chin. "I'll go tomorrow. Then I'll stay one day longer and rest up....then I'll leave the village! I have to make it to the Crafting School..."

When he looked up at the hanging moon overhead, Bai Yunfei felt a period of disappointment wash over him. He had been excited on the prospect of upgrading tonight, but after a period of self-reflection, he gave up on that idea. After a moment of stillness passed by, Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up, "Since I'm out here, I can't just sit around and do nothing! I might as well upgrade a few things! Even if I don't use the upgrade stone, I still have plenty of items—I'll just forcibly upgrade something!"

Determined, Bai Yunfei was now placing his bets on the traditional plan of 'upgrading in batches'!

Eliminating the thought of upgrading the more important equipment, Bai Yunfei took out several dozen equipment from his space ring. Many of them were the newly-obtained low quality soul armaments.

He was planning upgrading one of them into a high level item.

Deadset on this plan now, Bai Yunfei didn't bother to think twice. With a shake of his hand, a large hatchet appeared in his hand. This was the strongest soul armament he had found off the two brothers!

"No need to think anymore about it. Let's go—upgrade!"

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Middle Rare

Upgrade Level: +11

Attack: 366

Additional Attack: 238

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 7% chance of inflicting knockback.

Upgrade Requirement: 72 Soulpoints

“Haha, it worked!” Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up with joy. At the very start of this was a success, what luck!

Elated, Bai Yunfei returned the hatchet to his space ring and swapped it out for a +10 human-tier short blade.

With an expectant look, he thought, “Upgrade.”

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

As the short blade in his hands was reduced into dust and blown away by the wind, Bai Yunfei’s expression went rigid.

“Pft! I lost a soul armament.” Bai Yunfei coughed. Without caring anymore, he took out a shield.

“Upgrade.”

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

“Ugh...again!” Bai Yunfei took out a low-human tier soul armament.

“Upgrade!”

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

“.....”

There was an ugly look on Bai Yunfei's face as he took out another item.

“Upgrade!”

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

“.....”

“Upgrade!”

“.....”

Equipment Destroyed

.....

Equipment Destroyed

.....

Half an hour later, Bai Yunfei finally took out the semi-broken Goldsilk Armor. Still in a daze, Bai Yunfei let out a huff of air.

“Upgrade...”

Upgrade Failed

The Goldsilk Armor was reduced to golden dust and blown away....

He was about to blow his top.

Aside from the first item, everything else had been blown up!!

“How’d it come to this! It shouldn’t have! Damnit all, those were the soul armaments I only just got! Are you really just going to blow them up on me?!” Bai Yunfei cried out to the night skies as if demanding answers from the Heavens themselves.

“For fucks sakes, I can’t believe this! Even if these soul armaments were useless, I didn’t take them for nothing! Out of all these incomplete soul armament and soul armaments, I doubt that not a single one of them won’t be upgraded!”

Waving his right hand, there was a clattering sound of noise as soul armament of every type began to fall out from his space ring. With a wave of his left hand, another bundle of accessories fell into a messy pile with a clanking sound.

With all the items here, Bai Yunfei gave a lazy look over them all before thinking to himself, “Upgrade!”

.....

.....

Upgrade Successful

.....

Upgrade Successful

“.....”

.....

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Normal

Upgrade Level: +11

Defense: 2

Additional Defense: 16

+10 Additional Effect: Weaken presence by 10%.

Upgrade Requirement: 12 Soulpoints

.....

.....

Bai Yunfei couldn't even recall just how many times he had to stop to rest by this point. Whenever he felt his soulforce grow low, he'd swap out for some recovery items to recuperate his soulforce before continuing to upgrade the items again. By the time the star of Venus was out, the two piles of equipment in front of him were already all but gone....

.....

Upgrade Failed

Equipment Destroyed

“.....”

Several purple crystal dust fell between his fingers. Absent-

mindedly, Bai Yunfei watched as the dust flew away into the air. And when the dust flew away, his spirit felt as if it would too.

Not too long after, his neck turned around to look around the place and then to the two hands in front of him with a look of depression. “There’s....there’s nothing left. Several days of work, all gone just like this? But why! But how! But whyyyyy!!”

That’s right. After an entire night of upgrading, the pile of equipment in front of him was gone. It wasn’t because he stored them, it was because they had all been destroyed!!

Even the +11 hatchet that he called ‘opening luck’ had been destroyed on the second round!

And so out of all the upgraded equipment, he had only a few left....

Shaking his right hand, Bai Yunfei took out the slightly worse-for-wear strawhat.

Equipment Grade: Normal

Upgrade Level: +12

Defense: 2

Additional Defense: 28

+10 Additional Effect: Weaken presence by 10%.

+12 Additional Effect: Weaken presence by 50% when soulforce is consumed for this skill.

(May be combined with the +10 Additional Effect)

Upgrade Requirement: 17 Soulpoints

Practically in tears, Bai Yunfei looked at the strawhat and began to laugh. “What is this, a consolation prize? Are you telling me I’m meant to be a walk-on character my entire life? That I’m just some sort of no presence character?”

Filled with reluctance, Bai Yunfei gave up on upgrading and collected his ‘bounty’ from the night. Standing up, he looked at the

mounds of dust around him with a mournful sigh, “I’ve told myself to not be taken in by the urge to upgrade, but I’ve lost all sense of reason I guess! Regaining that reason after everything’s gone and blown up—what use is that! I have to be careful next time for sure....”

“But, there’s something slightly different to the Upgrade Technique this time! Damnit, I still don’t understand it though. Looks like the path ahead of me is a long one, there’s still plenty I need to understand....”

Still despondent, Bai Yunfei walked back to the village and slept until late that afternoon.

When he finally woke up, he had Zhu Zi take him to where the male had first found the upgrade stone before. Searching the mountain and all that was beneath his feet, Bai Yunfei could find nothing of importance despite the immense effort he put into searching.

On the second day, Bai Yunfei bade farewell to everyone in the village. Armed with a direction given to him by one of the village elders, Bai Yunfei once more set off on his path towards the Crafting School....

End of Book 2

Book 3 - *Crafting School*

Chapter 181: At the Base of Mount Crimson

Winter was coming, but the entire Great Plains Province was still not yet feeling the frost. If anything, the entire province was bright and sunny with winds blowing as per usual for a nice refreshing scenery.

Located at the very heart of the province was a giant mountain that towered into the clouds and above the entire surroundings. What was most peculiar about this mountain was the fact that its point was a crimson red color. It was almost as if this mountain peak was a single crimson point that was illuminating the entire area nearby.

Thus, this mountain became known as Mount Crimson, home to one of the top ten schools on the continent, the Crafting School.

On this day, countless throngs of people gathered at the base of the mountain in either groups of threes or fours or else by themselves. From the base to the entrance, there was possibly a count of over several thousand people waiting within an area of a thousand meters.

They weren't gathered here to battle, and neither was it for a social gathering. It was the Crafting School's annual event to welcome in new students.

Even though the event had yet to start, the crowds of people were especially rowdy; but this was mainly applicable to the ones gathered at the ends of the crowd. The closer and closer one got to the front end of the crowd, the more quiet it was. And practically within a hundred meters to the front, it was essentially a cemetery with how quiet everyone was. It was a drastic difference to the other group, and each one of these people were solemn-faced and tight-lipped as if there was something heavily weighing on their minds.

In front of this multitude of people were several dozen figures all

in the same strict posture. Their backs faced the mountains and their fronts faced the audience. Each one of them wore the same white-robed uniform with the insignia of a seemingly dancing flame. Even more noticeable was the fact that in this dancing flame, there was a rather ordinary-looking sword in it. But at a closer glance, one could tell that this sword had an extraordinary flame radiating from it. When the large crowd of people saw this design, they all had the same envious expression on their faces; this was the mark of a disciple of the Crafting School.

“Why haven’t they started yet? It’s already high noon, we’ve been standing here for at least three days already!” From his stone stool, one of the more bearded men cried out in anger as he looked to the crimson peak.

“Uncle, why are you complaining? I’ve been here since five days ago. Aren’t you here to join the Crafting School as well?” A young man saluted to the first man in greeting.

“Bah, why would you think that? I’ve no delusions about my own strength, and everyone knows about the strict rule of the Crafting School. Only those under the age of 25 are accepted! I’m just here to accompany the young lord, as long as he’s accepted, my journey here is well and over.”

“Oh? Brother, you’re here as a bodyguard too? I’ve two young lords to protect, they’re both mid-stage Soul Personages, so joining the Crafting School should be considerably easier for them.” Another middle-aged man interjected.

“Pah, mid-stage Soul Personage? What use is that? If they’ve no talent for the fire affinity, being even a late-stage Soul Warrior would be useless!” A twenty-something year old youth walked forward with a jeering smile. “How clueless is your little household? I’ve already had someone test me before, I’ve a high affinity for the elemental fire, I’ll definitely be accepted into the Crafting School!”

“Hey! Aren’t you Lu Renbing from Bluemont City? Since when did your Lu become some sort of super big family? And when did you have an aptitude for the elemental fire? I’ve never heard that before.” A mysterious voice spoke out from behind this youth. Turning around, everyone could see an elegantly dressed twenty-something year old youth. He wasn’t weak either and was about at the strength of a mid-stage Soul Warrior.

“Li Jiannan! A kid like you came too? If I don’t have an affinity for fire, do you have one then?!” Just from their frosty conversation alone, everyone could tell that these two figures had had trouble between each other before.

“Hmph! At least I’ve far more promise and strength than a late-stage Soul Personage like you!”

“You’re only just one small level higher, don’t think yourself so hi—”

“Now now. Let’s stop bickering, you two.....”

“.....”

Just beyond the group that was watching this spectacle, an inconspicuous person could be seen on top of a tree there. From what could be seen of him, this youth was wearing grey robes and a strawhat on his head. In his mouth was a single stalk of straw, and he looked clearly bored of the bickering that was happening in front of him.

Even though he was somewhat far away from the others, not a single person nearby had taken notice of him. It was almost as if his entire existence was negligible.

It was Bai Yunfei.

A month ago, Bai Yunfei had finally arrived at the Great Plains Province. For the sake of arriving on time to the Crafting School, Bai Yunfei hurried all the way over here and only took time to stop twice for a ‘mysterious cave’ (Without getting lost mind you).

Then afterwards stopping in the nearby Redfire City for two days, Bai Yunfei managed to get some rest and then rush on over here to spend an entire day in waiting.

By the time he got here though, there was already a sea of people. Since he was tired, Bai Yunfei borrowed one of the nearby trees to take a nap, only to be awakened by the noise that the people here were making. Seeing that it was about to start, he decided to look on from above rather than to go down and check for himself.

“Luren Bing? Li Jiannan? What great names they have....” Bai Yunfei quirked his lips in amusement. Looking around the place, Bai Yunfei began to make silent observations of the people around him, “25 and under with an affinity for fire...those aren’t a problem for me, but I wonder how they’ll test for this ‘crafting gift’....”

TL Note: Bai Yunfei mistakes the names of these two to mean: Stranger and Cheap male.

He had learned a decent amount about the Crafting School on his way there. For the Crafting School, there was three criterias which were automatic failures.

Being older than 25.

Not having a sufficient affinity for the elemental fire.

Not having the gift for crafting.

He was good for the first two conditions. But the third one was where Bai Yunfei felt slightly troubled by. Upgrading equipment was a clinch for him, but upgrading and creating were two different horses to ride. He had no idea at all if he had the talent for ‘crafting’.

But a shot not taken was a shot missed. It was far too late for him to back down now. He spent more than half a year to travel all the way to the Crafting School so that he could study the art of crafting. He wanted to become stronger, and now that he was oh-so-close to his destination, Bai Yunfei would do his absolute best to

join the Crafting School.

But no sooner did he finish thinking to himself when Bai Yunfei's eyes light up, "They're here!"

Coming down from the mountain, Bai Yunfei could see several dozen students follow a handsome-looking youth with an extraordinary aura to him. At his appearance, everyone else that were talking before immediately grew quiet. The silence began to spread throughout the crowd, and within a single minute, the entire crowd was silent. Turning to the front of the mountain, everyone in the crowd did their best to crane their necks to try and see what was going on.

But for Bai Yunfei, someone that was at the bottleneck of the late-stage Soul Sprite stage, a distance like this was negligible to him. He could see the entire situation as clear as day and spoke to himself with excitement, "Late-stage Soul Ancestor! How amazing —even in presence, he could beat practically everyone here!"

.....

The young man leading the group gave a level stare at everyone gathered before him. Even the young lords whose strengths were at the Soul Sprite level couldn't help but avoid his gaze when he looked at them, as if afraid of their eyes meeting.

The students behind him split into two rows, and with a wave of their hands, over twenty long tables appeared in front of everyone. Moving quickly, the students then began to place something on each of the tables.

"Everyone, I am a student of the Crafting School, Song Lin. Today, I will be the one responsible for overseeing the examination for any applicant's aptitude with elemental fire." The one now known as Song Lin spoke to everyone with a respectful greeting. His voice wasn't loud, but it traveled for long distances into the ears of everyone there.

“I presume everyone knows the conditions of our Crafting School. Our school will test for the age of every applicant, please do not think you might be able to scrape on by with luck. The examination for aptitude with the elemental fire is relatively simple as well. We of the Crafting School own specialized equipment that only requires the applicant to stick their hands in for us to see the results.”

Pointing at the twenty tables, everyone could see that each of the tables were filled with black boxes. Inside these black boxes were several palm-sized red crystals. On the faces of these crystals, it looked as if it could fit an entire palm on it.

“We are not testing to see how much soulforce everyone has, but rather the degree of aptitude one has with the elemental fire. For every soul cultivator here, please do not transmit too much of your soulforce into these crystals; as there is no point to that.”

Waving his hand one last time, Song Lin announced, “Well then. Let the examinations begin!”

Chapter 182: Testing For the Gift of Fire

“Failed! Next!”

The calm voice of one of the students of the Crafting School called out. In front of him was a young man with a face filled with disappointment. His right hand was pressed on top of the ‘testing apparatus’ before the judgement was made. When it was announced that he failed, the applicant slunk away in dejection to allow the person behind him to replace him at the front. At the instructions of the student, the next person placed his right hand on top of the box.

This one was a late-stage Soul Apprentice. When he placed both hands onto the box, he accidentally unloaded all of his soulforce into the stone. Under the excited eyes of the applicant, the red stone imbedded in the box flashed several times before finally receding.

But before several seconds could even pass, the red stone gave no more indications of flashing any more. Even though that young man had used all of his soulforce, it did nothing for him.

“Failed!”

The student observing him called out.

“Failed.”

“Failed.”

“Failed!”

“.....”

At the same time, three other observers called out one after another. The applicants for their respective tables then all left the tables with looks of dejection on their faces....

“This is ridiculous! Not a single one of the last hundred people passed!” Someone from the crowd cried out again and again.

“Yea! Is this examination even accurate? I could see the stone light up a few times for some, why didn’t they pass?”

“Hah, idiot! The stone flashing only means that you’ve an affinity for the elemental fire, but having the light flash so weakly like all these guys only mean that you’ve not the talent for it! That means you’ve failed to meet the standards of the Crafting School!”

“Then how strong does the light have to be?”

“Who knows? No one has passed yet....”

“.....”

Whilst everyone was bickering, a completely different judgement was suddenly made from one of the tables to the left.

“Passed! Medium talent!”

From the third table to the left, a red-faced young man was practically frozen still to where he stood. He had been so surprised by the judgement that he forgot to take away even his right hand, but it did nothing to hide the shining bright red stone in the box.

This was one the young man bickering with Li Jiannan some time before the examination started, Lu Renbing.

“I....I passed?!” Lu Renbing jerked his hand back disbelievingly. Still in a daze, he had to ask the student judging him to repeat the judgement.

The student in question smiled and nodded his head. “Correct. You’ve passed, but it’s a little too early to be too happy. This is only a preliminary examination. Now, go and wait over there for now.”

A second student came to guide Lu Renbing to an empty spot near the base of the mountain. And as they walked, the crowd of people watched him walk away with jealous looks.

“Who would’ve thought that kid would actually pass!”

“It can’t be! Did you see how bright that stone was flashing? That

was only ‘medium talent’?! What kind of high standards does the Crafting School have!”

“You don’t say! Did you think entering one of the top ten schools on this continent would be a walk in the park? The Crafting School looks relatively easy! I’ve heard that the Wind Lightning School had only ten people pass, and the first-ranking applicant there had to withstand an attack of elemental lightning from one of the students!”

“.....”

“Pass! High talent!”

Everyone’s head snapped to the fifth table from the right where the applicant who passed was a seemingly young villager boy from the middle of nowhere. Amazed, the boy stared at the dazzling stone in front of him and asked the student in bewilderment, “Woah....ah...ah really passed?

The student in front of him nodded his head, “Your talent for it is pretty good. Joining the school should be no problem, but entering the inner ranks is up to your talent for crafting. Please wait over there.”

Once again, the entire group of applicants watched the simplistic-looking youth be walked on over to the area where all the successful applicants went with envious looks.

“Che! A country bumpkin that isn’t even a soul cultivator, but he passed with high talent?!” Someone from the crowd grumbled in complaint.

.....

“Are you kidding me?! You’re saying I’ve no talent for elemental fire? I’m Li Jiannan, the strongest genius of Verno City in the Range Peak Province! I’m a goddamn mid-stage Soul Warrior! Everyone within a thousand miles know my name, and you’re telling me my talent isn’t enough?!”

Just at that moment, the seventh table from the right had a exasperated cry ring out from it. Turning their heads towards the commotion, everyone could see a pitiful-looking young man yelling at the student. His hand--which was originally placed on the completely dim stone--was not pointing at the student in charge of judging him with a quiver to it from all his anger.

The student narrowed his eyes in response to the man, but his words were calm in his rebuke, “Vernox City? Never heard of it before. And never have I heard about your name either. The examination was clear for you to see. Please leave and don’t hold up the line any longer!”

“Yo--you liar! How could I not have talent for the elemental fire?! I...I...” Li Jiannan’s face was contorted with anger and his body shook spastically as if he wanted to argue, but when he was faced with the warning glance of Song Lin, Li Jiannan paused mid breath. His anger abated away, leaving him to only speak out in a defeated tone, “I invited an expert to give us an examination, he said that I had the talent for it....”

“This so-called ‘expert’ of yours, is he even more accurate than the examinations of our school?” The student in front of him spoke in disdain, “Your talent in cultivation is fine, but your affinity for the elemental fire is pitiful. Go back and continue your training, perhaps you’ll find another affinity more suited to you. If you continue to argue with us here, then you’ll have to excuse us if we force you to leave!”

The mid-stage Soul Sprite besides Li Jiannan hurried to whisper to him, “Young master, perhaps we should leave. It’ll be trouble if we cause trouble with the Crafting School....”

He was a man that lived a completely different life than Li Jiannan. He was not ignorant, and he was not pampered throughout his entire life, so he knew that Song Lin’s cursory glance had a well-hidden source of pressure in there. If they didn’t leave, then they’d be ‘guided’ to the exit.

On the other side, when Lu Renbing, who had already passed, saw the still angrily cursing Li Jiannan being walked away, he had a very happy smile on his face.

“Next!” Spoke the very same student who dismissed Li Jiannan.

His expression was still the same as before.

.....

And so the examination continued to go on in a swift but orderly manner. A continuous stream of disappointed people would often be seen turning around and walking away from the examination grounds.

Not very many people made it through.

Roughly a kilometer away in a forest to the right of the examination ground, there was the sound of a young but tender voice singing some sort of strange song.

“Lalalalala.... Xiao Baibai’s wings are so white~

Xiao Rourou’s body is so soft~

Xiao Baibai and Xiao Rourou are good friends~

Friends of Dai Dai~

Xiao Rourou hey~”

Hanging on top of a very tall tree, a pair of pink embroidered shoes swung forwards and backwards on one of the tree branches. Keeping with the rhythm of the ‘song’, the owner of these shoes were revealed to be a very young girl sitting on the tree branch. She looked like she was singing a song while looking at the examination grounds from the cracks of the foliage.

The song was clearly a composition she made herself.

This young but innocent looking girl looked to be fourteen or fifteen years old in age. She had a petite figure, and she wore lace clothing that suited her well. On her waist was a small bag

embroidered with the pattern of a butterfly on it to hold her things.

Her face was like that of a small baby, giving any person that saw her have the urge to pinch her cheeks. She had a cherry-colored mouth and a lovably cute nose as well. Like a bright crystal, both of her eyes shined brilliantly, and her ears were equally short. A short bun was prepped up on the left side of her head so that the rest of her hair would rise up shortly towards the sky before drooping back down and shake side to side when her head was moved.

This young girl wore two pink mittens that were soft but furry from its materials, but her fingers were exposed halfway through to show off her white pigmented skin.

“Xiao Rourou hey, Xiao Rourou...hm? Where are you, Xiao Rourou?” Halfway through her song, a sudden thought struck the young girl. Looking left and right, she quirked her lips and asked, “Xiao Rourou’s gone. Heehee, is it time for hide-and-seek? I know where you are then~”

Giggling, the girl leapt down from the ten-meter tall tree and landed gracefully on the ground. Skipping into the forests to her left, she continued to hum and chant her song to herself.

.....

On the other side, Bai Yunfei was currently waiting in the line to the left. The wait was so long, Bai Yunfei felt as if he was waiting for the food lines from long time ago.

But there wasn’t much of a choice. Far too many people were trying to get in, and he was one of the later ones to show up. Thus, he had to be in the back.

While he stood helpless where he was, a twelve-year-old young man could be seen talking to Bai Yunfei endlessly....

Chapter 183: Meddling in the Affairs of Another

Just every so slowly, a twitch started to creep onto Bai Yunfei's lips as he looked straight ahead in helplessness at the still talking young man in front of him.

"That man in charge of the examinations, Song Lin, he's a late-stage Soul Ancestor! Did you see how strong he was when he came out, or how cool he was! Over a thousand people went quiet as soon as he appeared! If uncle Zhao didn't tell me about him earlier, I would've thought these people realized how noisy they were! Hey, uh, brother Bai, why are you wearing that ugly strawhat? I heard from uncle Zhao that you were stronger than even him, is that true? Why do you want to join the Crafting School? Cousin Liu Mang and I want to join because we want to make our own soul armaments, what about you...."

This young one was named Zhong Xuhao, a twelve year old youth that acted towards Bai Yunfei with great familiarity since the very beginning. From the start, he chatted with Bai Yunfei as if they were old friends for practically an eternity.

From Zhong Xuhao's self-introduction, Bai Yunfei knew that he was the young heir to a noble family from one of the sourthern cities in the empire. He came with his cousin to the Crafting School to join, and he was extremely confident that he'd be able to join. By his side was the equally young person named "Liu Mang". True to his name, his eyes stared surreptitiously at the prettier-looking women in the groups around him and rarely involved himself in the talks between Bai Yunfei and Zhong Xuhao. The fact that he chose to mind his own business made him look rather pitiful.

They were twelve years old, but they were mid-stage Soul Personages, making them both to be geniuses of their generation.

By the side of these two was a middle-aged man that was said to

be the ‘uncle Zhao’ from before. He had a helpless look on his face when he stared at Zhong Xuhao. Beforehand, he had even warned Zhong Xuhao about approaching Bai Yunfei, “I told you this person behind us isn’t your average person and that you shouldn’t talk to him.”

But in the end, Zhong Xuhao went to talk with Bai Yunfei. If not for the fact that Bai Yunfei didn’t seem like a bad guy or an arrogant person, this man would’ve dragged Zhong Xuhao away.

“He has a very plain aura to him, I almost missed him the first time. But he’s undoubtedly of the Soul Sprite stage at the very weakest. He can’t possibly be from one of the more major families, can he? Only the ‘self-proclaimed’ major families would take this public route to entering the Crafting School. The major families would all just send their children to the seniors of the school for an apprenticeship....maybe this is some sort of genius from a village somewhere?”

The man thought to himself as he made his own discreet judgement of Bai Yunfei. Despite the confusion and suspicion, he decided not to pursue the matter any longer.

While absentmindedly listening to the blathering of Zhong Xuhao, Bai Yunfei began to look around himself. Many of the people lined up behind him were the ones who had been at the front of the crowd prior to the start of the examinations. Only a single look was needed to tell that they were all from wealthy families since they all had plenty of bodyguards with them. They were all calm, but arrogant, but they were all soul cultivators at the very least. Surely they all had to be the younger generation wishing to try their luck in joining with the Crafting School. As long as they did, then their prospects for the future would surely look bright.

It was at that moment the ear-piercing sounds of someone cursing up a storm could be heard from the side. Turning his head, Bai Yunfei was just in time to see Li Jiannan. As he was being

walked away with his bodyguards, Li Jiannan was constantly swearing to himself in anger.

“Hmph! Li Jiannan deserved to be eliminated! He of all people don’t deserve to join the Crafting School?” Zhong Xuzhao snorted in response to seeing him walking away from the place.

“Hm? Do you know him?” Bai Yunfei asked.

“I don’t, but I met him on the road. What a stuck-up asshole! On the way, he kept trying to use his power to play around with any women he saw. If we didn’t arrive when we did, those poor women would’ve suffered a terrible fate. He’s the scum amongst scum, and a disgrace to all us nobles! He’ll be crippled by someone one day, I bet!” Zhong Xuhaao critiqued him with an undisguised amount of juvenile hatred. He was clearly a twelve year old child that was trying to pretend to be a fully matured noble.

Bai Yunfei could only sigh at that. He didn’t particularly care about the nobles since there were plenty of them—Zhang Yang was the perfect example of this. While Bai Yunfei didn’t like these types of nobles, he couldn’t simply beat sense into them whenever possible. If he didn’t come across one committing a crime, Bai Yunfei didn’t care to do a thing about them.

It was just at that moment another person was called out to have “high talent” and passed. It was a young late-stage Soul Warrior, causing everyone to look on and discuss to one another.

Wanting to see what was going on in front, Zhong Xuhaao stood up on his tip toes and turned away from Bai Yunfei to look. Bai Yunfei looked relieved for a moment before a sudden thought struck him. With practically a second to think about it, Bai Yunfei slipped away from the line and disappeared into the crowd.

“Brother Bai, that person is just a little older than me, but he’s already a late-stage Soul Warrior. How amazing! How’d you think he trai—

--Brother Bai? Where'd you go?" Turning his head back to Bai Yunfei, Zhong Xuhao was surprised to see that Bai Yunfei was gone.

Uncle Zhao was surprised as well. Looking around the place, he could see no hint of Bai Yunfei's figure. "I was only just distracted for a brief moment, but he slipped away without me noticing him..."

.....

Looking ahead of themselves, Chen Lu whispered to the grinning Li Jiannan in concern, "Young lord, it would be for the best for you to not act this way. We are still near the Crafting School, if someone were to find us here, it'd spell trouble for us. I know you are feeling angry still, but it'd be best if we return to Redfire City...."

"Shut your mouth! I can think for myself! We're already far enough from the examination grounds! If we wait a little bit, we'll be able to avoid anyone's eyes!" Li Jiannan snarled. Looking straight ahead, he licked at his lips with a vulgar look on his face. "It was a good idea to come on out here with the family. Hehe, how beautiful this is! I'll be bringing home something good...."

Chen Luo's eyebrows knitted together in worry. He was well aware of the addiction the young heir had, but while he disapproved of it, he couldn't exactly say anything about it either. The house of Li had took care of him since he was a young boy and had even given him a primal stone to help him breakthrough to become a Soul Sprite and a bodyguard. For his gratitude, he knew it wouldn't be his place to critic Li Jiannan in place of his father. All he could do right now was to pray that Li Jiannan was right and that no one else was nearby....

And now that they were practically a kilometer away from the examination ground, Chen Luo and the other two bodyguards with him followed behind Li Jiannan as they walked through the

forests. Slowly trekking ahead, they could just faintly hear the sounds of a melodious voice—or the voice of a fairy—singing in the tune of a strange song.

“Lalala, Xiao Rourou, where are you hiding? Even if you hide, I’ll be able to find you~” The singer of this song was currently being followed by Li Jiannan. When Li Jiannan and his group left the examination grounds, they became across this girl and decided to help find this ‘Xiao Rourou’ with her. Without her knowledge, she found herself in a relatively far away place before being stopped by a young man.

Halfway through a giggle and a skip, the young girl came to a sudden halt. Turning her head askew to look at the youth, she asked, “Eeeh? Who are you? Why are you blocking Dai Dai’s way? Do you want to play hide-and-seek with me?”

Li Jiannan’s face was completely red and his facial features were completely distorted in his excitement. The very sight of this young woman was enough for his wretched personality to fully show itself. No longer would he bother playing the good guy.

With a sinister chuckle, he stalked towards the young girl. First, he’d capture her and take her away from the place.

Then, he’d live out the ‘pleasures’.

But the young girl continued to stare at Li Jiannan innocently, as if she didn’t understand what he was planning on doing.

“Hey! Are you really planning on trying something here? I advise you to stop or else face a tragic consequence.”

Just as Li Jiannan was several meters away from the young girl, a calm voice called out from the left parts of the forest, causing Li Jiannan and his group to give a small start. Whipping their heads towards the source of the voice, they could see a strawhat wearing youth sitting on top of a tree branch twenty meters away from them with a calm look on his face.

Startled by the newcomer, Li Jiannan took a single step back before turning to look at Chen Luo. Calming himself down, he looked back to Bai Yunfei and snarled, “Brat, go mind your own business or else I’ll start getting rough with you!”

“Chen Luo, if that kid tries to do something, get rid of him!” Li Jiannan barked out a command to Chen Luo before turning back to stare down the girl who was currently staring at Bai Yunfei curiously. As he drew close to her, a lewd expression appeared on his own wretched face. “Little loli, I’ve got you in my sights...”

Author Note: Should there be a problem if a different world has the term loli too?

But Chen Luo could only grimace to himself when he heard Li Jiannan’s command. Staring at Bai Yunfei, he thought to himself, “How easy it is for you to say that. This isn’t Vernoxy City where you can act as you please. I can barely see through the strength of this person, and you’re telling me to get rid of him?”

Seeing how exceedingly arrogant Li Jiannan was, Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows furrowed together. Just as he was about to move in to help the young girl, another unforeseen development had just then been thrown into motion!

That girl, she....

Chapter 184: There's Strange Things Everyday, but Today Even Moreso

The adorable smile on the girl's lips immediately shriveled away before her face twisted together with tears starting to form from her large eyes. And in the next second, a 'waaaah' erupted from her lips!

She had actually been brought to tears by Li Jiannan!

"Waaaaah...ugly ugmo! You scared Dai Dai....you meanie! You grew ugly on purpose to scare Dai Dai....waaahhh....you're a meanie! A meanie!" The one called "Dai Dai" wailed and rubbed away at the tears with her chubby fingers.

"Pft!"

Bai Yunfei had originally a stern look on his face, but when he saw just how cute this girl was acting, he simply had to laugh. Crying was fine, but...the man may have looked ugly, but it wasn't as if he looked that way specifically to scare you!!

For two seconds, Li Jiannan was frozen still. Then, his entire body began to twitch and tremble before he looked to the young woman, "Yo-you...."

The 'you' persisted for several seconds before he finally shut up. Never had he ever come across such a situation before, and now, he was in a complete mess. After the shock subsided, anger flooded his entire face. With his right arm drawn up high, Li Jiannan moved to slap the young girl!

Catching sight of this, Bai Yunfei's right arm shook once to retrieve a dagger into his hand. Just as he was prepared to throw it, yet another shocking development occurred again and stopped him dead in his tracks!

"Bang!!"

Following a muffled explosion of flesh being hit, Li Jiannan's entire body was sent flying backwards like a cannonball. His body traveled several meters before finally smashing against a tree nearly a meter wide. For a moment, his body was thrown across the tree before finally sliding back down to the ground.

There was a large concentration of red light from where the crying girl was. All around her, a tremendous amount of soulforce exploded forth from her body.

“So—Soul Ancestor!!”

Bai Yunefi’s eyes threatened to pop out from their sockets at the sight of this. For a moment, he was so stunned that he forgot to even move. In disbelief, he could only stare the young girl. This amount of soulforce was many times stronger than his, meaning that she had to be a mid-stage Soul Ancestor at the very least!

Chen Luo was at a loss for words as well. Standing where he was, Chen Luo didn’t even know what to think at this moment.

In a single instant, the young girl had stretched her right hand forward so that the pink gloves she wore exuded a brilliant red light. It felt as if it was absorbing the elemental fire in the world into its material and then processing it to suddenly materialize into a physical form—a physical form that resembled cat claws about two meters in length and made of some sort of energy!

With the ‘cat claws formed, the young girl then pressed downwards with it....

“Pow!” Li Jiannan had been in the process of struggling to his feet when the girl slammed him down onto the ground again. Wiping away her tears with her left hand, she continued to slap Li Jiannan with the giant cat claw again and again as if she was smashing a rat.

“Waaaahh....who said to scare Dai Dai? Who said to bully Dai Dai? Waaaah, you scared Dai Dai! You scary meanie!!” She wailed

while slapping Li Jiannan over and over again.

.....

“Young master!!” Finally snapping back to awareness, Chen Luo quickly flew towards Li Jiannan in a burst of purple light.

His movement had been anticipated by the young girl however. With a cat-like cry, her claws—er, her hand swooped to the side to stop him. All Chen Luo could see was a giant energy claw come flying towards him with unbelievable speed before a ‘pow’ sound was heard. Like Li Jiannan, he was sent flying through the air ten meters away before collapsing against another tree.

Removing Chen Luo from the equation had been as easy as slapping a housefly for her. And with him gone, she turned back to Li Jiannan and continued to beat him even more. Every so often, a small sob escaped her lips as if she felt wronged by everything. But even still, she didn’t stop her actions at all....

Bai Yunfei didn’t know what to feel, and neither did he really know how to react. But after several seconds of complete shock, he was unable to stop himself for staying quiet any longer, “Hey—hey there, little sister! You should stop hitting him, or he’ll die soon enough!”

With Li Jiannan slapped around on the ground to practically his dying breath, Bai Yunfei felt extremely sorry for him. Never could he imagine that such a cute-looking girl would be able to kill a man in such a manner like this.

Even though he shouted twice, the young girl didn’t quite seem to hear him or even respond. Without any other choice, Bai Yunfei moved to rush towards her. But before he could even make any progress towards her, the young girl immediately swung a hand back in response to him.

“Pfft!” Bai Yunfei hadn’t expected to see that the ‘cat-like’ young girl would suddenly slap out at him, but he managed to cross his

arms across his chest to protect himself. With a bang, his body was sent backwards.

Somersaulting in midair, Bai Yunfei landed back down onto the ground. Before he could do anything else however, something out from the corner of Bai Yunfei's eye caused him to grow startled. Kicking off with his right foot, Bai Yunfei managed to throw himself to the side and bringing his right arm up to protect himself.

A single flash of red arced past Bai Yunfei before flying towards the young girl.

“Ting!!”

There was a short chafing sound from where something struck the arm with his Flameblade Bracer. Despite the protection, Bai Yunfei still felt a slight sensation of pain.

“Soulbeast!!” Bai Yunfei thought. Twisting his head, his eyes widened in surprise when he registered the beast that attacked him. “A pig?!”

Indeed. The soulbeast in front of him was a pig about a meter tall!

It was a peculiar pig—it was standing on its hind legs like a human, but its four limbs had four hooves that shined brightly due to its sharpness. Both of its eyes shined brightly with a brilliant light normally seen in the eyes of a human; but the most important thing was that it was completely red!

In short, Bai Yunfei felt as if the soulbeast standing in front of him was some sort of roasted suckling pig that stood up like a human....

But Bai Yunfei didn't dare laugh out loud for this line of thought. He knew that this pig had a hostile light to his eyes, and judging from the soulforce radiating from its body, it was a late-stage fifth-tier soulbeast!!

There's always something strange everyday, but today happened to have even more strange things than usual. First, he came across a second generational that wanted to commit acts of criminality in the presence of the Crafting School, then he came across an extremely terrifying young girl that was a mid-stage Soul Ancestor at the very least, and now he was being attacked by a late-stage fifth-tier roasted suckling pig!

Just briefly, Bai Yunfei felt that his brain was slightly addled....

“Eeeeh? Xiao Rourou, you’re back!!” Just at that moment, the young girl let out a happy shout from excitement. Choosing to stop hitting Li Jiannan, she ran to hug the little pig in front of him and then pointed a finger at the downed Li Jiannan. “Where did you go? Dai Dai was looking for you when this meanie scared Dai Dai! How scary, waaah!!”

The roasted suckling pig....no. Wait. ‘Xiao Rourou’ turned to look at the young girl with an apologetic look. A look of hatred could be seen on its face when it looked at Li Jiannan before then turning to Bai Yunfei with indignation as well.

“Ah....uh....you misunderstand the situation. I’m not with that guy. I actually came here to help this little sister....” Realizing what was going on, Bai Yunfei’s heart skipped a beat as he waved his hands to explain the situation.

It was at that moment that the pale-faced Chen Luo came staggering back into the place. The corners of his lips had some blood dripping from it still, and his face was grimaced together from all the pain. In just a scant few minutes, things had progressed to such a terrible state like this. If it was within his abilities, he’d like nothing better than to escape from this dangerous place. But with Li Jiannan over there, he hadn’t any choice but to try his best to find an opportunity to take him away when everyone was focused on Bai Yunfei. Hurrying over to Li Jiannan, he picked him up from the ground and checked for his vitals.

Then he let out a sigh of relief—there was breath still.

Bai Yunfei didn't even bother to stop Chen Luo from taking Li Jiannan away. And the little pig didn't seem to notice either. When the little girl saw that the crater where Li Jiannan was before was empty, she let loose a happy smile and hugged the pig tightly to herself. “The meany is gone! Hehe, Dai Dai fought them off! Xiao Rourou, see how amazing Dai Dai is...?”

As she spoke, the young girl rubbed at the head of the little pig, causing its stern expression to shatter away and be replaced by a helpless one.

A big sweat drop formed on Bai Yunfei's head—wasn't this change in expression a little too quick?

But before anymore time was given to him to think, an ear-piercing sound broke the silence from his left!

In the next second, a flaming long sword blew through the forest and into Bai Yunfei's view.

Chapter 185: Fighting With A Student of the Crafting School

The incoming attack was a swift one, but the startled Bai Yunfei had been quick to respond. Pushing off of his right foot with speed equivalent to the wind itself, he retreated ten meters behind in an instant. In the next second, he turned his body around to look at where the sword came from.

“Tink!” The sword embedded itself into the spot where Bai Yunfei was once standing, and in no time at all, a blaze was immediately started in its place. The entire area a meter away from the center was scorched instantaneously, and the sword handle trembled slightly with a buzzing sound.

At the same time the sword fell, a single person flew out from the side and next to the landing spot of the sword. With a flick of his right wrist, the sword was pulled out from the ground and back into his hands. Armed with his sword, the man retreated several steps so that he’d come to a stop in a protective stance in front of the young girl.

This newcomer looked to be a rather ordinary-looking person and of the same age as Bai Yunfei. Turning his head for a moment to look at the small pig, he then looked at the tear-stricken face of the young girl with a relieved look on his face. Turning back to look at Bai Yunfei, his face grew angered, “How audacious you are! I don’t care who you are, if you dare bully my junior, you’re going to die!”

Now that this person was completely in sight, Bai Yunfei could finally see the clothes that he was wearing and who this person was.

This person was a student of the Crafting School.

“Junior? So this little girl is also a student of the Crafting

School!” Bai Yunfei was surprised to say the least. Cupping his hands in greeting to the angered young man, Bai Yunfei spoke, “Dear friend, you misunderstand, I was actually—”

“Spare me your quibbling you reckless bastard! I, Fei Nian, will be sure to beat some sense into you before I hand you over to master!” Not even allowing for Bai Yunfei to explain himself, the one named Fei Nian immediately charged towards Bai Yunfei with his soulforce erupting from both his sword and body--this person was a late-stage Soul Sprite!

“I said this was only a misunderstanding, I was—” Bai Yunfei was surprised; he thought he’d be able to explain the situation.

“Whoosh!”

The sword flashed brilliantly in an arc of red as it stabbed at Bai Yunfei’s shoulder, forcing him to dodge to the side.

“I was—”

“Hua!”

Fei Nian leapt into the air in preparation to land a kick onto Bai Yunfei’s throat.

“I—”

“Clank!” The sword came slashing down onto him, forcing Bai Yunfei to block with his bracer.

“.....”

Now, Bai Yunfei was angry.

“Since when was there such an unreasonable person like this in the world! If you’re not going to listen to reason, then I’ll say it after you’re beaten on the ground!”

Having no other words to spare, Bai Yunfei snorted. His feet slid across the ground as he began to make use of the Wave Treading Steps so that his body flickered at times. When the sword of his enemy came flashing at him in an attempt to stab him, Bai Yunfei

made a sixty degree incline backwards to duck under it and made several steps backwards.

With a shake of his right hand, the Fire-tipped Spear appeared in it. Pushing his soulforce into the spear, Bai Yunfei brought it in front of him so that it'd clash with the fire sword into a dance of sparks. Due to the sword being bolstered by the red light, Bai Yunfei's body shook from the collision, but he continued to move forward anyways. With renewed speed, Bai Yunfei spun his spear so as to strike at Fei Nian's waist!

When the spear came into sight, Fei Nian had a slight look of surprise on his face, but Bai Yunfei's sudden counterattack forced him to grow serious. Using his sword to block would be fruitless, and so would dodging. So instead, Fei Nian decided to put away his sword and brought out a giant hammer in a burst of light. With a grunt, he slammed his hammer in direction opposition of the spear.

This was the very first time Bai Yunfei had ever met someone that'd respond to a sweep of his spear like this. With the abrupt change in momentum, the spear was forced out from his hands. But because Fei Nian wasn't adept with using a hammer, his body gave a slight rotation before he could correct his footing. Turning back to face Bai Yunfei, he put away his hammer in favor for a golden saw-tooth chakram. With a buzzing sound, the chakram was flung towards Bai Yunfei.

Following the momentum of his spear, Bai Yunfei managed to get a better grip onto it. As soon as he did, the whistling sound of something circular spinning through the air suddenly drew close to him. A golden light began to exude from the blade, and in no time at all, the blade was already nearly at Bai Yunfei's eyes. Surprised, Bai Yunfei brought his spear up to block it.

There was a clanking sound before the chakram was repelled away, but the force of it was enough for Bai Yunfei to stagger back yet again. Just as he prepared himself to counterattack, he came to

a realization that Fei Nian's right hand was clenched tightly. He looked as if he was holding onto something, but before Bai Yunfei could even look at it any closer, Fei Nian suddenly gave it a powerful yank backwards!

There was an ear-piercing whistle coming from behind his head, causing Bai Yunfei to blanch. Instinctively, he tilted his head downwards and brought his bracer up to protect himself. There was a flash of golden light that arced past and destroyed the clothing on his right arm first, and then a flurry of red sparks and a screeching metallic grunt. That golden chakram had been brought back to attack his head!

Fei Nian held his hand up with his fingers outstretched, revealing a practically invisible thread connecting the chakram to his hand.

In this battle alone, three different soul armaments were used by Fei Nian alone. Bai Yunfei had used the Fire-tipped Spear and the Flameblade Bracer, but he wasn't using them to kill his opponent, he was merely just surprised on how this person was fighting.

"So this is how a student of the Crafting School fights..." Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up with a strange glow. In all of his past battles, he had fought his enemies with a constant stream of different soul armaments. Never had he imagined that today would come a battle where'd he be on the receiving end of that!

But still, when it came to soul armaments, Bai Yunfei didn't have a shortage of them either!

The Fire-tipped Spear was strong, but even if it were to miss a stab at its opponent, the explosive effect would certainly cause trouble for everyone involved. Thus, Bai Yunfei put away the Fire-tipped Spear in favor for several throwing daggers for a battle of long-ranged weaponry.

Fei Nian wasn't slow on his part either. Seeing that this person that was bullying his junior wasn't weak either, his anger for this man caused Fei Nian to feel disinclined to prolong the fight any

longer. With a snort, he began to make use of his surefire killing move.

With a shake of his right hand, a half meter by meter tall black wooden box suddenly appeared right in front of him. In the moment before Bai Yunfei could throw his daggers, Fei Nian immediately pushed all of his soulforce into the box and then tossed the box away.

Instead of tossing this box at Bai Yunfei, Fei Nian threw the box upwards. Under Bai Yunfei's surprised look, Fei Nian stuck out his linked-together forefinger and middle finger towards that box and twisted them as if he was twisting a key.

"Open!" He cried out.

Following his command, the wooden box began to creak and crackle before opening up. Red light washed out from the box and filled up the entire area around it; in an instant following the cranking sounds coming from within this box, beams of red light shot out from the 'main body' as well!

When Bai Yunfei managed to get a clear look at these red beams of light, he had been so shocked that the daggers in his hands were dropped to the ground. These red beams of light; they were clearly longswords made of red flashing light!

There was a spasmodic twitch on Bai Yunfei's lips as he glared at the sight. "I was planning on using these daggers to stop you, but you've clearly one-upped me with this rain of swords!!"

It was clear to see that this box Fei Nian threw out was a sword box. And all these swords hailing down from the skies were the swords that used to be stored inside it!

But despite Bai Yunfei's ridiculing moment, all of these seemingly incomplete soul armaments or soul armaments began to drop down from the skies onto him. Grim-faced, Bai Yunfei began to weave left and right in an extreme display of dexterity to dodge

everything. Even though it looked exceptionally thrilling, he had to focus on every single movement at the most crucial of moments to avoid being hit. If he got hit, it'd not be for a minor injury.

Truly, Fei Nian was so shocked by this display that he found it hard to recover from. This was his personalized soul armament, the Unlimited Blade Box. It was an earth-tier weapon to say the very least, but here it was, completely ineffective! He had put in his entire strength, but each sword had been dodged with some sort of strange movement skill, how completely and utterly amazing!

It was a concentrated rain of swords, but it didn't last long either. In a few scant seconds, the earth was filled with over three hundred swords, and the sky was already a dark red color from the light of the box. Another two rounds of swords were thrown out before the red light finally scattered away for a ceasefire. With a whistling sound, the box then dropped down from the skies and onto the ground.

At last dodging the final blade thrown at him, Bai Yunfei was finally able to let out a sigh of relief. But just as he started to let down his guard, a wave of danger suddenly washed back over him again. Looking up, Bai Yunfei suddenly came to realize that Fei Nian was already dashing up close to him with his right hand in some sort of golden glove. As it approached him in an attempt to punch him, this golden glove began to release two rays of red and gold light.

The irises of Bai Yunfei's eyes contracted slightly, but he wasn't too far gone with shock. Taking a half step backwards, Bai Yunfei clenched his right fist and met his opponent's fist with an equally strong move of his own.

Ninefold Fist Force!

But before the eve of collision, the rays of red and gold light suddenly curved outwards to avoid Bai Yunfei's fist and slammed

straight onto Bai Yunfei's wrist!

“Bang!!”

Practically instances before the fists met, Bai Yunfei could feel his entire right arm go numb as something was transmitted into his body.

Startled, Bai Yunfei thought to himself, “Crap!”

Chapter 186: Elder of the Crafting School

The reason why Bai Yunfei had said ‘crap’ wasn’t because of the danger to himself, but rather....

When the strange ambush happened onto his hand, it had activated the +10 additional effect of the Flameblade Bracer!

(+10 Additional Effect: When blocking, there is a 9% chance of absorbing and converting the attack power into personal attack power, releasing it with your next attack. It can be held for 3 seconds. The amount of converted attack power cannot exceed the defensive strength of this item.)

And the activation moment was when both their fists collided!

According to his calculations, Bai Yunfei’s usage of the Ninefold Fist Force would be enough to knock Fei Nian back without much damage to either parties. From there, he’d be able to have the chance to explain things and hopefully end the fight there. Bai Yunfei was really afraid that this fight would end up as a battle to the death.

But now that the effect of his bracer was activated and the power of his enemy’s punch was absorbed to fuel his own punch, Bai Yunfei could no longer control the outcome....

“Crack!”

A crack perforated the air as Fei Nian’s entire body flew through the sky. Tumbling in the air as he went, Fei Nian tumbled down to the ground with his left arm holding onto his shaking right hand. His teeth were clenched together from the pain, and his face was flush red due to his pain threshold being passed.

An apologetic light entered Bai Yunfei’s eyes as he brought his fist back. It was an accident to say that this happened, but he couldn’t apologize for that either. Expressionlessly, he spoke to Fei

Nian, “It was you who wanted to fight me, I just wanted to tell you that I had no intentions on hurting your junior at all.”

“Hmph! Don’t get too excited! I’m the successor to the second elder of the Crafting School, how could I possibly lose to a non-namer like you!” Fei Nian’s face grew red—either from pain or anger; he was clearly angry now however, and his eyes were revealing the humiliation he felt.

With a howl, his left hand forced his right hand to shake once. In a flash of light, a black sphere the size of a soccer ball appeared in his hand. With some soulforce, elemental fire began to gather in his hands and into the sphere. Covering the entirety of its surface, the soccer ball slowly began to float up into the skies and start to rotate.

A sense of dread began to fill up Bai Yunfei’s mind. Sweat starting to drip down from his back as he regarded the sphere in front of him—if Fei Nian were to use this sphere, Bai Yunfei’s life would be in danger!

“Tsk!” Bai Yunfei’s eyes narrowed together, “If you’re going to try and kill me, don’t blame me for anything!”

With a shake of his right hand, the Glacial Pricker appeared in his hand.

“Fei Nian, stop!!”

A forceful cry rang out from behind the two. A pair of male and female appeared in this moment so that one of the two would be by Fei Nian’s side while the other would be by the young girl’s side. The male was the overseer to the examinations, Song Lin, and the female was a twenty-something year old young woman with hair that traversed past her shoulders and a face that was tender in appearance.

“Seniors!”

The colors in Fei Nian’s face changed drastically at the sight of

these two. Quickly recalling the black sphere back into his hands and recontrolling the power in it, he turned to meet Song Lin with a rather unwell-looking expression.

“Who told you to use that! Do you want to kill yourself?! What if your junior was hurt by your actions!” Song Lin rebuked him with narrowed eyes.

“I....”

“I don’t need your explanation. Go on back and subject yourself to solitary confinement for three days in penitence!” Song Lin finished up before noticing the wounded right arm of Fei Nian. “You’re hurt? What happened?” He asked in concern.

“Heehee, sister Lian Lingming, brother Song Lin, why’re you here?” The voice of the young girl called out at that moment. She could be seen tugging at the arm of the other female in audience before continuing to say, “Brother Fei Nian was having a match with brother strawhat! Heehee, they’re both so strong....”

“Ehhh....” Song Lin was at a loss for words.

A big sweat drop appeared on Bai Yunfei’s face—“I was telling you guys this entire time, but not once did you help try to explain. Do you think this is a game?!”

Taking out a small handkerchief, the one called Lian Lingming dabbed at the tear trails of the younger girl affectionately, “Dai Dai,” she spoke softly, “Tell your sister, what happened? Why were you crying?”

“Wahh....a super ugly person tried to scare Dai Dai, but Dai Dai managed to send him running, heehee....” Dai Dai looked to the crater where Li Jiannan once was with a smile.

Song Lin had still a questioning look on his face, but when he was about to ask for more clarification, something caused him to whirl around in surprise, “Master has arrived!”

“Who dares bully my little girl!!” No sooner did Song Lin finish

speaking did a howl like a crack of thunder come blasting into the area. A wave of soulforce washed over the area so that it felt everything in the vicinity was being searched. When Bai Yunfei was hit with this wave of soulforce, he felt his breath suddenly recede back into his throat so that it felt as if he was choking.

Even before the final words of this angry howl could be uttered, a male and female figure could be seen flying through the skies.

Yes. They were flying in the skies.

The male was a bulwark middle-aged man with a disk of green light underneath his feet. Besides him was a purple-robed middle-aged woman with a dignified expression. Rather than a disk of green light, her feet was standing on top of a flashing green long sword.

No sooner did these two appear did they descend to the ground right by the young girl's side.

"Master!"

Song Lin, Lian Lingmin, and Fei Nian called out in greeting at the same time. But while Song Lin and Fei Nian were referring to the male, Lian Lingming was referring to the woman.

A look of elation entered the little girl's face when she saw the middle-aged woman. Dropping the pig in her arms, she ran towards the woman and dove into her arms with a giggle, "Mom! Why are you and dad here?"

Stroking her head with a loving touch, the woman cooed warmly, "We sensed that something was happening so we came over at once. Rui'er, tell your mother what happened, okay?"

"Waaa....nothing really. Xiao Rourou and I were playing hide-and-seek, that's all." She pointed at the sad-looking pig she discarded earlier for her mother's embrace before then pointing to the man-shaped crater besides them. "There was a baddy too, but I scared him off! Heehee, he was really weak! Even my cat gloves

were able to beat him....”

Nodding, the middle-aged man turned to look at Bai Yunfei with a dark expression, “Who are you?” He growled, “Speak now, and if you hide anything, I’ll cripple you!”

The indomitable pressure weighing on him made Bai Yunfei’s entire back slick with sweat. The pressure felt as if there was an increasingly heavy hill being dumped on top of him, and so Bai Yunfei felt it almost impossible to breathe even. But trying as hard as he could, he managed to lift his head and speak one word at a time, “This. Junior. Is. Weak. But. I’m. Not. The. Criminal. Please. Don’t. Interrogate. Me. Like. This!”

“You!!” A furious glare entered the man’s eyes. Never did he imagine that a youngling like Bai Yunfei would speak to him like so!

But even so, he relented and decreased the pressure he had building up in the area, and even the red light in the area dimmed in intensity by a bit.

Still, Bai Yunfei’s entire forehead was dripping with sweat and his legs were shaking so badly that he felt he’d fall down any second now. However, he didn’t back down.

“I was helping you guys, and here you are threatening my life and interrogating me with so much pressure, what the hell!”

“That’s enough....using your presence as a Soul Exalt to intimidate a youngling, have you no shame?” Right as Bai Yunfei was reaching his breaking point, a warm voice cut into the air as the middle-aged woman walked to the man’s side with the young girl in tow, “When will you ever fix this temperament of yours so that we can ask this young man nicely?”

Embarrassed by her words, the middle-aged man relented and withdrew his aura so that the pressure in the area was reduced. The middle-aged women then walked up to Bai Yunfei with a small

smile on her face, “My husband is very worried about our daughter, so I hope you won’t take too much offense to his treatment just now. Rui’er says you’re not a bad person, so would you perhaps tell us what happened just now?”

“Whew....” Bai Yunfei sucked in a deep breath of fresh air before replying, “I am Bai Yunfei, if I may ask who you two seniors are....?”

“These are the second and third elders of the Crafting School!” Song Lin warned him from some distance away.

“Elders of the Crafting School! No wonder they’re so strong...” Bai Yunfei thought to himself with a nod of his head, “Well, what really happened was....”

Without exaggerating any of the details or hiding any of it, Bai Yunfei explained all that he saw and heard with the young girl sometimes nodding or adding something in collaboration.

.....

“Hmph! Just how are you running this examination if an outsider managed to catch onto this before you!” The second elder glared at Song Lin, “After the examinations are over, report to Tiechui and accept your punishment!”

“Yes, master....” Song Lin didn’t dare retaliate and accepted his punishment meekly.

“As for that damnable brat...” The second elder turned towards the direction Li Jiannan and the others escaped to with a baleful glare. “If they’re looking to find a way to die, I’ll be more than happy to show them the way!”

Finishing his speech with a wave of his hand, the green disk from before appeared right in front the man once more. Standing on top of it, he immediately set off to give chase.

Bai Yunfei was surprised; “Killing someone just to vent his anger, really?”

Despite only a slightest amount of killing intent detected from the man, Bai Yunfei had no doubts that he would slaughter Li Jiannan and the others should they meet.

With power like his, a feat like this was as easy as a snap of the fingers.

“How many times have I told you to change your habits? Why must you always be so reckless....?” The middle-aged woman sighed, “When there’s so many younglings around, you cannot act so rashly like this. Be calm, like what one expects from us old ones. Those ones didn’t hurt Rui’er either, so death would be too extreme of a punishment....”

Bai Yunfei let out a sigh in relief, it seems that this senior was a kind one....

But then her next words crashed Bai Yunfei’s parade. “There’s no need to kill them. Cut off one of their hands and cripple their cultivations, that should suffice.”

“.....”

Chapter 187: Escaped

Cutting off one of their hands? Crippling their cultivation?

...that'd be considered 'just enough'?

But even as he was thinking to himself, Bai Yunfei could already feel the corners of his lips twitch. It didn't matter if he was looking at the second elder flying in the sky or the middle-aged woman affectionately combing the hair of her daughter, Bai Yunfei could only feel a sweat drop crawling down his face.

Fidgeting around, Bai Yunfei cautiously said to the middle-aged woman, "Uhm... senior, if this junior may, may I leave? I've yet to take my examinations to enter the Crafting School..."

"Oh?" The woman looked surprised, "You wish to join the Crafting School?"

"Yes."

"A late-stage Soul Sprite..." The woman measured Bai Yunfei with an eye and a nod of the head, "Not bad. Judging from your age, you must be in your twenties?"

She couldn't be blamed for thinking that Bai Yunfei was in his twenties. After all that had happened to Bai Yunfei—especially in the last half year of traveling. Bai Yunfei had matured greatly since his departure from Talus City. Combined with the recent travel fatigue from hurrying on the road, Bai Yunfei had been 'weathered' by wind and rain so that he looked completely different than before.

"I turned nineteen just last month." Bai Yunfei scratched his head in embarrassment.

"What? You're only nineteen? That's only four years younger than me, how could that be!" Fei Nian suddenly cried out in disbelief. Song Lin had only just reset and healed his arm, but now, both he, Song Lin, and Lian Lingmin were all stunned to hear his

age.

“I really am nineteen...” Bai Yunfei shrugged his shoulders as if to tell them, “There’s no point in lying to you. It’s up to you if you believe me or not.”

“Nineteen...” Even the middle-aged woman hadn’t thought that to be Bai Yunfei’s age. She started to re-evaluate him once more. Just faintly, Bai Yunfei could feel a wave of soulforce wash over his body. It persisted for a few seconds as the woman looked at Bai Yunfei before finally smiling. “Ah, yes. I see now. With a talent like this, you’re of the same standing of Song Lin...”

“With your case, becoming an inheritor to one of the elders of the Fire School wouldn’t be a challenge for you, or perhaps even becoming a student of the schoolmaster there. Why come to our Crafting School?” The woman asked him.

Surprised by such a question, Bai Yunfei could only answer honestly, “To learn the art of craftsmanship and grow strong!”

“The art of crafting isn’t something that can be learned even if one has talent for cultivation. Even if you pass the examinations, it doesn’t mean you’ll have success in the crafting aspect. In the worst case scenario, it’d impede your desire to grow stronger...”

“Without giving it a try, how would I know the answer?” By now, Bai Yunfei had figured out what the middle-aged woman was getting at, “Besides... I’ve confidence in myself!”

“Is that right? Ohoho...” She didn’t know where this confidence was coming from, but the woman nodded in satisfaction. “Where did you come from?” She asked, “Are you perhaps here at the request of your family?”

“This junior is from Talus City of the Azure Cloud Province...” A flash of bereavement entered Bai Yunfei’s eyes at mention of his homelands, but he continued speaking anyways. “I’m no child of any families or clans. I am but a commoner with no family left in

the world..."

His response raised the eyebrows of the woman. She had noticed the fluctuations of his mood from his response. With a sparkle in her eyes, she nodded her head again, "Very well, there's no need for you to take the examinations. With your strength as a late-stage Soul Sprite with an affinity for the elemental fire, taking the examinations down here is worthless. Go up the mountain and take the examination for crafting."

Her words filled Bai Yunfei's heart with elation, but his face was still as calm as stone. Giving a respectful bow to the woman, he replied in gratitude, "Thank you so much, third elder!"

"Yes, yes." The woman nodded before turning toward the direction of the examination. From there, a set of footsteps could be heard before a group of ten students arrived shortly afterward.

"Song Lin, Lingmin, continue with the examinations. Make the preparations for Bai Yunfei to go up with the others to take the next examination." The woman nodded at each of the students here and gave them all commands. With a wave of her right hand, a green sword appeared in front of her, and with another wave, elemental fire began to float into the sword. She along with the young girl began to rise into the air with the sword beneath her feet, and within seconds, they flew through the sky.

"Brother straw-hat! Let's meet again on top of the mountains! Heehee..." From far away, the voice of the young girl came calling out, eliciting a grimace on Bai Yunfei's face as soon as he heard it.

He stumbled back and stowed away the straw-hat as fast as he could. If he were to gain a nickname like this in the future, it would be utterly embarrassing!

"Ah!" From far away, a cry of distress could be heard from the little girl.

"Where's Xiao Rourou, I lost him..."

“Oink!”

As if to respond to her, the distressed call of the ‘pig’ could be heard on the ground below. Saddened about being forgotten, the late-stage fifth-tier soulbeast’s head was lifted toward the sky, watching the little girl. In no time at all, the soulbeast disappeared in a trail of dust as it chased after the two flying figures...

A sweat drop fell from Bai Yunfei’s head.

“Well then... now that everything’s done and dealt with, let’s continue with the examinations.” Song Lin clapped his hands and called out to one of the students, “Sanxian, come here.”

“Senior, what is it that you need?” The one named ‘Sanxian’ asked. He was a young man with thick eyebrows.

Song Lin pointed at Bai Yunfei, “He is Bai Yunfei, take him up to where the others are waiting to take the next examination. He’ll be taking the crafting examination rather than the first one.”

Not expecting this request, Sanxian looked stunned for a moment before nodding his head. “Understood.” He replied.

From there, Song Lin took the other students with him back to the examination grounds, including the newly-recovered Fei Nian who glared at Bai Yunfei briefly before following Song Lin away.

Smiling, San Xian looked to Bai Yunfei, “Bai Yunfei, is it? I’m Zhang Sanxian, a student of Nan Feng. You can call me Sanxian! Let’s head on over then, it won’t take even an hour to finish off the rest of the applicants for the first examination.”

“Yes, then, if you’d please lead the way, senior Sanxian.” Bai Yunfei spoke.

“Haha, well said! Once you enter the Crafting School, we will be fellow students, so there’s no point to being so polite.” Zhang Sanxian laughed out loud as he lead the way.

As they walked, Zhang Sanxian asked, “Ah, junior Bai, what

happened just now? I swear I saw the second and third elder..."

Contrary to his previous words, Zhang Sanxian took advantage of Bai Yunfei being a prospective student and called him his ‘junior.’ Bai Yunfei didn’t know whether or not he should be retelling what happened, so he decided to answer vaguely. “It wasn’t much. One of the failed applicants from before tried doing something here, and I caught him...”

“Oh, I see...” Zhang Sanxian could tell that Bai Yunfei was holding back the entire story, so he decided not to press on with his questions. Changing the subject, he asked, “Well, junior Bai, you won’t be needing the first examination right? If you’re entering the next round of the examinations, that must mean one of the seniors tested you already?”

“Not at all, but the third elder has said that I was already a late-stage Soul Sprite with an affinity for the elemental fire and that I’d not need to take the first examination.”

“What!? You’re a Soul Sprite!?” Zhang Sanxian’s eyes popped wide open at that.

Bai Yunfei nodded.

“Woah! Just comparing the two of us makes me want to cry. I’ve worked hard since I joined the school when I was eighteen, but I’m only a late-stage Soul Warrior. You look to be my age, yet you’re already a Soul Sprite. How amazing are you!?”

“Haha, brother Sanxian, you praise me too much. I was only lucky, really...”

Either Zhang Sanxian was very enthusiastic around Bai Yunfei, or he was originally a chatterbox to begin with. Throughout the walk, Zhang Sanxian would tell him so-and-so about the Crafting School and would often answer Bai Yunfei’s questions without hesitation. Obviously, most of his answers were already common knowledge to the outer world, but Bai Yunfei wasn’t aware of most

of these things, hence why he asked. Other than that, Bai Yunfei knew better than to ask about the Crafting School's more secretive things and never once asked about them.

Before long, the two of them arrived at the examination grounds. Looking around, Bai Yunfei could see that the amount of people here was reduced to more than half the original amount, but among these people, a good amount of them were just bystanders that wanted to stick around to watch the examinations.

Bai Yunfei was led to the rightmost part of the mountain base. All of the people that had passed the first round of examinations were gathered in the same area as well.

In this one area, only a hundred people had actually passed—with the first examinations ending, only a meager hundred had passed!

Now that the two of them had arrived, Zhang Sanxian said to Bai Yunfei, “Junior Bai, please wait here for now. I’ll be helping the others finish off the rest of the examinations. From there, we’ll take you to the crafting examinations.

Bai Yunfei nodded his head, “Please do what you must, brother Sanxian. Don’t worry about me.”

Looking around the area, Bai Yunfei found himself a nice and isolated place to rest. Sitting on top of a giant boulder, Bai Yunfei was about to close his eyes and rest when a loud voice suddenly called out to him from behind.

“Hey, kid! I saw you come out of the forest. What makes you think you can come here without taking the examinations?”

Chapter 188: There'll Always Be Someone That Needs A Spanking

The call out had surprised Bai Yunfei. He turned his head to the side to see a twenty-three or twenty-four year old young man with four ‘servants’ accompanying him. The one up front had a disgruntled look on his face, so Bai Yunfei knew that it was him that had called out to him earlier.

Quirking an eyebrow, Bai Yunfei said, “What? You got a problem?”

“I was asking you a question, and this is how you answer? Everyone else here got through the examination fair and square, but you’re going to just waltz on over? Patooey, you trying to pull some strings and enter through the backdoor or something? Since when did the Crafting School allow that...” The short-haired youth glared in disdain at Bai Yunfei.

It was no wonder he was annoyed. In his clan, he was touted as a genius, but out here, he was pushed around and treated almost tyrannically by those around him. Forced to wait for several hours, he was annoyed to see someone else just walk into the area where the ones who passed went. Therefore, when the student guiding Bai Yunfei was gone, the kid decided to vent his anger on him. Bai Yunfei looked like a pushover in any case.

Bai Yunfei opened a single eye to look at the male. He was a late-stage Soul Warrior—which by all rights, wasn’t half-bad for his age—but his personality was definitely lacking. Far too lazy to respond to the male, Bai Yunfei turned his head to look back at the other examinees.

“Hey brat! Our big bro is asking you a question. You really have the balls to not answer him?”

“Our big bro Li Jianren is a genius! He’s a late-stage Soul

Warrior, and his affinity for the elemental fire is the highest ‘best talent!’ He’s on his way to become a Soul Sprite and make his own soul armament, becoming the student of one of the elders won’t be impossible. Are you still going to ignore him!?”

“Hmph, you’re an arrogant one. Don’t think we’re afraid to teach you a lesson and show you who the top dog is in this new group of students?”

“That’s right...”

When the servants of Li Jianren saw how Bai Yunfei was acting, they immediately began to kiss ass and jeer out loud. Of course, they were kissing Li Jianren’s ass and threatening Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei turned his head in surprise. Staring at the group with his mouth twitching slightly, he couldn’t help but smile, “Li Jianren? Could he be the brother of Li Jiannan?”

The look of shock on Bai Yunfei’s face had been mistaken for submission by Li Jianren. Waving his hand in satisfaction, he managed to shut the mouths of everyone there. Pointing his finger at Bai Yunfei, he pompously said, “I can forgive you for your ignorance. Now hurry up and answer my question and call me ‘big bro.’ I’ll let you follow me maybe!”

There surely were plenty of birds in a forest, but even men like this were able to enter the Crafting School? Bai Yunfei was further amazed, but he managed to say two words to him, “Not interested.”

“You—!”

“Eeeh? Aren’t you brother Bai!?” A happy voice suddenly cut into Li Jianren’s sentence before a group of four made its way over to where Bai Yunfei was. Leading at the front was Zhong Xuhao and Liu Mang.

Bai Yunfei was surprised to say the least. He hadn’t expected the two of them to pass the examination at all, but he managed to

smile and nod anyways, “Ah, so you two passed the examinations as well. Haha, not bad...”

“Heehee, I didn’t think I would either, but as it turns out, I’ve medium talent! That’s good enough for me. As long as we can pass the crafting examination, we can become students of the Crafting School!” Zhong Xuhao ran a hand through his hair in excitement.

Looking at the two youths behind them, Bai Yunfei asked, “And these two are...?”

“Oh! Let me introduce you!” Zhong Xuhao piped up right away, “This is Mo Xiaoxuan and this is Xi Yan. They’re both late-stage Soul Warriors with high talent!”

“Is that so?” Bai Yunfei looked at the two youths with even more surprise than before. To be blessed with this strength and talent at such a tender age meant they’d surely be successful in the future. The fact that the equally young Zhong Xuhao had managed to make friends out of the two wasn’t bad at all either.

Mo Xiaoxuan was a short-haired youth that gave a cheerful and friendly greeting to Bai Yunfei. Xi Yan on the other hand was far more reserved, but he didn’t seem to be a bad person either. After giving Bai Yunfei a nod of his head, he turned his back to watch the rest of the examinations.

Liu Mang took this opportunity to walk up to Bai Yunfei and speak for the very first time since they met one another. Craftily, he whispered, “Brother Bai, I saw you speaking with a beautiful student earlier, you’re amazing! You’ve only been here for so long and you managed to strike it already. In the future, please remember this little brother, heeheeee...”

Bai Yunfei grew speechless; it was true he gave a greeting earlier to Lian Lingmin, but had Liu Mang really seen that? And furthermore—that little kid had been quiet for so long, but who would’ve thought that the very first thing he’d talk about would be something so wretched!?

“Oh, brother Bai, are these people your friends?” Liu Mang pointed at Li Jianren and the others, who had been pushed off to the side by the arrival of Zhong Xuhao and the other three.

“Don’t know them at all...”

.....

As the group continued to talk to one another, Li Jianren’s face began to flash in alternating colors of blue and white. Being ignored by this group for so long had started to make him so angry that his entire body began to shake as if the group had done something to him.

At last, he stamped a foot down onto the ground and shattered a piece of stone as he pointed an indignant finger at Bai Yunfei. Barking with anger, he cursed, “Fuck your mom! Kid, how dare yo
—”

“Bang!”

A sudden thump cut into Li Jianren’s final words before his entire body was sent flying high into the air. His body spun several times in before he finally fell back to the ground with blood and several broken teeth falling after him.

From where he used to stand, Bai Yunfei withdrew his right fist to stare icily at the crawling figure on the ground. “There’s some things you just can’t say to people. If you try it again, I’ll pull out your tongue!”

“.....”

This development had happened far too fast; practically everyone who saw it was stunned into silence. Bai Yunfei had just been smiling happily as he talked to Mo Xiaoxuan and the others, but had suddenly turned into a terrifying person that had struck a late-stage Soul Warrior so hard that he flew through the air! Such an event would be too hard for anyone to really respond to.

“Mmmghhhh!” It took Li Jianren several seconds to register

what had happened. Just as he opened his mouth to speak, some more blood and teeth came falling out. Nearly mad with anger, he pointed yet another finger at Bai Yunfei and howled, “You—I’ll... I’ll fu—”

“Fwomph!” Bai Yunfei’s right arm flew up to reveal a bright red flame over his palm. “Don’t think I’m bluffing with you, I dare you to try me!” He spoke icily to him.

“A Soul Sprite!!”

Bai Yunfei’s usage of soulforce had once more led people around him to grow shocked once again. This time, everyone was looking at him in respect.

“He’s a Soul Sprite, with an affinity for fire! No wonder he was able to skip the first examination...”

“He’s already a Soul Sprite, so why does he want to join the Crafting School?”

“To be so powerful at such a young age, which house is he from?”

“.....”

Faced with the icy glare from Bai Yunfei, Li Jianren didn’t even know what to say anymore. Shock and reluctance filled his face, but he no longer knew what to do. His group of ‘brothers’ had long since abandoned him as well.

“Fighting is prohibited on the examination grounds, what is going on here!?”

Just then, the voice of the heavens itself was heard by Li Jianren. Turning his head, he could see a group of students come toward them; at the very front of the group was Zhang Sanxian.

Zhang Sanxian’s eyes looked to the swollen face of Li Jianren before to Bai Yunfei in surprise. Quirking his eyebrows, he asked, “Junior Bai, what’s going on here?”

Extinguishing the fireball over his palm and withdrawing his

soulforce, Bai Yunfei adopted an apologetic expression on his face. “Brother Sanxian, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to cause trouble, but this person was being very rude so I just had to teach him a lesson.”

“Ah? Alright...” Zhang Sanxian nodded his head without asking anymore questions. Turning to Li Jianren, he said, “Go off to the side and heal yourself! If you start trouble again, consider your rights to joining the school revoked!”

This student was clearly favoring Bai Yunfei, causing everyone to start to wonder about Bai Yunfei’s status once again. Why would the students of the Crafting School give such ‘consideration’ for him?

“Junior Bai, the first round of examinations are almost over. Wait a little longer and we’ll take you to the next round shortly.”

Zhang Sanxian spoke to Bai Yunfei without caring what the audience was saying before leaving again.

As Bai Yunfei started to talk with Zhong Xuhao and the others, everyone began to look at Bai Yunfei differently again. Mo Xiaoxuan and Xi Yan were both looking reverently at him.

Power—what makes you stand out to others.

.....

At the third table from the right of the examination grounds.

“Failed, next!”

One student called out after looking at the barely lit stone.

A dejected late-stage Soul Personage left the examination and was replaced by a long-haired young man of the age of twenty-two or twenty-three. He looked rather frail, but his body was straight in posture and his lips were curled in a faint smile. Clearly, he was a youth that carried himself with an elegant manner.

When he walked forward, the youth didn’t even bother to put his

hand on the box. Instead, he smiled at the student overseeing him, “Brother, I don’t believe I’ll be needing this examination.”

“What? What do you mean by th—”

Just as the student was in the middle of questioning the youth, the youth raised his right hand up.

“Bang.”

A ball of flame immediately materialized over his palm. In the bright red flames, there was a faint green light.

Dispersing the flames, the youth continued to speak—

“I am Ye Zhiqiu, twenty-two-year-old citizen of Freesia City in the Yellow River Province. I am a late-stage Soul Sprite with a dual affinity for wood and fire!”

Chapter 189: Heading Up the Mountain

The faint voice of this youth carried over the rest of audience and caught their immediate attention. Among that audience, Song Lin, Lian Lingmin, Bai Yunfei, and Mo Xiaoxuan were one of the few that heard him.

“Late-stage Soul Sprite!”

Bai Yunfei thought to himself in surprise while the others repeated his sentiments out loud and began to discuss with one another.

“Wow! Another Soul Sprite, he’s the same as you, brother Bai! And the elements he showed off looks kinda special...” Zhong Xuhao remarked with wide-open eyes as he looked at Ye Zhiqiu in admiration.

“He has the affinity for both fire and wood...” Mo Xiaoxuan spoke.

Bai Yunfei nodded his head, “Yes, that’s right. He’s both a late-stage Soul Sprite and a soul cultivator with both those affinities.”

“Fire and wood! How can there be such a young person who could become a late-stage Soul Sprite with two affinities? I... I feel so inferior. Wood gives rise to fire, and if he has good control over both, the elemental fire he uses will definitely see a huge increase in strength. Even if he joins the Crafting School or the Fire School, a genius like this would be wanted by everyone. Out of all of us here, looks like he’s the best of us...” Mo Xiaoxuan sighed. Meeting the people he did today had really melted away the pride he felt in being called a ‘genius’ during the past ten years of his life.

Even the student that was overseeing the examination for Ye Zhiqiu looked at him in admiration. “One with two affinities is either a reckless idiot or a determined genius. This guy is definitely the latter... this bi-annual event for students of any school always

seems to gather plenty of geniuses, but the Crafting School really does seem like a gathering ground for the more special ones..."

.....

From far away, Fei Nian start at the back of Ye Zhiqiu's figure and let out a dejected sigh, "And yet another Soul Sprite has come to enter the Crafting School..."

"An outstanding talent for cultivation isn't a representative of strength for our Crafting School. Even for those who are stuck at the late-stage Soul Warrior stage, many of these outstanding geniuses lose to them when the time comes to create their own personalized soul armament..." Song Lin looked away to ask Lian Lingming a question, "Lingmin, how goes the female students this time, are there any good ones?"

"None. The amount of female applicants each year is already small enough, and the ones that do pass are practically zero. No female has yet to appear with a talent of 'high' yet. I wonder if we'll even have anyone else that'll stand out after this." Lian Lingming shook her head before smiling, "But still, that's not really a problem. The fact that there's five female juniors with decent talent should be enough for master to be satisfied. Not having any exemplary ones come up this year shouldn't be that bad."

A look was spared at the area where all the passed applicants were gathered, by now, there were nearly two hundred of them. Sighing, Song Lin said, "I wonder if there'll be any students the headmaster or elders will accept as their successors. There weren't many core students from our previous generation, so our generation right now is especially important to them. The Crafting School has been silent for twenty years without losing our edge, but we aren't as powerful as before either. We can't let our school lose any more face!"

Lian Lingmin laughed, "Haha, I can already tell that there's some

more outstanding figures in this next generation already. There's two people with the best talent for fire, and several people with 'high' talent in it. There's also that wood and fire affinity soul cultivator Ye Zhiqiu, and that Bai Yunfei. Even junior Fei Nian wasn't a match for Bai Yunfei!"

Going scarlet in the face, Fei Nian immediately opened his mouth to say, "Hmph! I was just careless, that's all! If we fight again in the future..."

"Haha, alright, I won't say anything more about it. You should head up the mountain and prepare for the examinations, Fei Nian. Escort the ones that passed up the mountain as soon as the first round is over." Song Lin immediately interrupted Fei Nian's 'explanation' with a wave of his hand and a laugh.

"Oh, yes! Right away, senior..."

.....

Half an hour later, the first round of examinations concluded.

The ones that were still lined up for the examination were all people who were calm and prepared, so the acceptance rate in the final half hour had been a lot higher. Practically another hundred people passed for a final number of over three hundred people.

Compared to the beginning when there were thousands of people here, it was a rather pitiful amount.

Under the lead of Song Lin, the ones who had passed the first round were guided up Mount Crimson.

A seemingly endless spiral staircase wove around a forest and up beyond the fog ahead of everyone. Bai Yunfei and his group stood at the very back of the group with Zhong Xuhao occasionally looking around and whispering to somebody. Right beside them was a newcomer to the group, Ye Zhiqiu.

It went without saying that Zhong Xuhao's perky and optimistic nature was very popular to the group. Combined with his young

age, it was hard for anyone to believe he had any nefarious intentions. After a series of energetic talks, even the easy-going Ye Zhiqiu had been recruited to join their ‘group.’

Zhang Sanxian came by to talk to Bai Yunfei when the group had reached the halfway mark of their journey, and with Zhong Xuhao’s quick words, a decent relationship was established with ‘senior Sanxian.’ Soon enough, everyone was talking and smiling as if they were in a carefree environment.

Of course, this journey was carefree and easy for them since they weren’t weak at all. Out of the three hundred people here, there weren’t many soul cultivators. A good majority of them were just commoners who had nothing but hope to join the Crafting School. Some of them were even males that weren’t even ten yet. For them, walking up a series of stairs for half an hour was painfully hard.

After passing the first examination, who would give up here? With grit teeth and pursed lips, the commoners of the group gathered up the rest of their strength to follow from behind. Some of the more durable applicants had even lended a hand to those struggling—an act that Bai Yunfei felt was very admirable.

.....

Two hours later, the stairway finally came to an end. Bai Yunfei’s eyes could see a giant clearing with a hallway that simply could not be described with words. Climbing the final steps, the group all ended up standing in a giant plaza.

Author note: Sweatdrop In truth, I don’t really know how to explain this. If this description doesn’t really work for you readers, please imagine one on your own. Whatever the case, it’ll have to do...

After giving everyone some time to catch their breath, Song Lin walked up to the front of the group. All of the idle chatter was immediately shushed as he swept his eyes across the area, looking

at the commoners in the back. Eyes filled with praise, he smiled, “Not bad. Not bad at all. In some time from now, someone will come and take you all to the Northern Point for the second examination. This is a special test only our Crafting School does. Being a Soul Cultivator serves no use here. The test does not rely on cultivation. If you fail here, do not be disappointed. You are all people with decent affinity for the elemental fire. Joining another school would not be an achievement any less than ours...”

It was at that moment a dark-skinned young man with a serious look on his face came toward the group. Nodding his head, he asked, “Senior, may I bring them over now?”

Song Lin nodded his head. “Yes, if junior Xiao could please do the honors then.”

Standing in front of everyone, the newcomer loudly said, “I am the second student of the headmaster of the Crafting School, Xiao Nanren. Follow me to the Northern Point, but take note that the Northern Point is ordinarily a place where all students are forbidden from entering. If you move elsewhere without our say so, you will be cast out from the examinations immediately!”

.....

Chapter 190: The 'Simple' Crafting Examination

Under Xiao Nanren's guidance, everyone was led through the halls and onto a path that led through the forest. Past the forest path was a steel bridge about a kilometer long, and just past that was a seemingly ordinary cave with a faint but mysterious feeling to it.

Upon seeing this cave, Bai Yunfei's first and most immediate thoughts were to go in and investigate this cave to see if there were any bearded old men or any precious treasure inside, but when he thought about what this place was, his mind immediately thought of something, "This is the destination, so is this where that 'crafting examination' will be held?"

Xiao Nanren came to a stop just a few steps before the entrance of the cave to talk to one of the more bulky-looking males standing guard. "Senior Tiechui, this is the applicants for the next round of examinations. I entrust them to you now."

After nodding to the guard, Xiao Nanren turned back to the others and spoke to the applicants, "I was only responsible for leading you here. From here on out, the personal student of the second elder, senior Li Tiechui will be in charge of overseeing your next examination."

This announcement had been enough to shock the majority of the people here. This docile and village-boy-looking person was actually one of the personal students to one of the elders!? Many of them had just thought that he was merely a guard to the cave itself.

"Li Tiechui... is this what the second elder meant by 'Tiechui' earlier?" Bai Yunfei thought back to when the second elder had ordered Song Lin and the others to report to 'Tiechui' for punishment at the base of the mountain. Based on names alone,

this person had to be the one in charge of doling out punishment to the students of the school.

Was the one in charge of punishment really someone that looked so simple and straightforward? A feeling of skepticism began to arise in Bai Yunfei's head...

An honest smile began to form on Li Tiechui's face. Laughing out loud, he said, "Well now, are you the future students? I am your senior, Li Tiechui. Now, don't be so nervous, the following examination is very simple. Follow me through this cave, and the examination will begin. It'll end as soon as we... walk out from this cave. Haha..."

"....."

Not ever did anyone think to hear such an examination like this. Even Bai Yunfei was left confused—what in the world did this mean?

"Hehe, there's no need for you all to guess. You'll come to know what I mean soon enough. Let's not waste any more time or else we'll waste daylight trying to get down the mountain. Everyone, follow me now!" Li Tiechui waved his hand and strode straight into the 'mysterious' cave.

A single person strode straight from the crowd and right after Li Tiechui. It was Ye Zhiqiu; he had taken the initiative to follow Li Tiechui, prompting a smile to appear on Bai Yunfei's own face. Taking a step of his own into the cave, Bai Yunfei was followed by Mo Xiaoxuan, Yi Xan, and the others.

With Xiao Nanren leading everyone into the cave and out of sight, the other students guarding the cave began to laugh to each other, "There's still so many people willing to enter this place? This isn't a cave where strength can help you..."

.....

It took only just several hundred meters of Li Tiechui leading

them through the cave before Bai Yunfei began to grow disappointed. He wasn't the only one, everyone else behind him had started to grow disappointed as well.

This cave.

There was nothing in it!

The entire passageway through this cave was quite dark with only a few white-colored stones illuminating the inside. Aside from the stone walls and ground, there was absolutely nothing else to be seen. Not even a blade of grass.

But still, after another several hundred meters into the cave, Bai Yunfei began to feel an oddity. It wasn't an oddity pertaining to the cave, but to the people around him!

"Brother Bai, have you realized it too?" A grave voice whispered to him from the side. Bai Yunfei turned his head, only to see Ye Zhiqiu right next to him.

Nodding, Bai Yunfei replied, "Some of the people here look unwell, as if they're being weighed down on. But..."

"I don't feel that feeling however." Ye Zhiqiu nodded in agreement.

"Is it because of our strength?" Bai Yunfei guessed.

However, Ye Zhiqiu shook his head and pointed to their right. Over there, a mid-stage Soul Warrior could be seen with sweat dripping down his flush-red face, and right by his side was an ordinary kid just barely in the double digits without a fluctuation on his face. The little boy would constantly stare at the stones that shined light into the cave, a face filled with curiosity, but that was the only emotion to be seen on his face.

And then, another few hundred meters later...

"Brother Bai... I... I don't feel... so good." Zhong Xuhao pulled weakly at Bai Yunfei's sleeves with a pale face.

Startled, Bai Yunfei hurried to ask him, “What? What’s wrong?”

“I don’t... know... the place just feels... strange around me...” Zhong Xuhao turned to look around himself before looking back to Bai Yunfei, “Or maybe it’s the air... the entire cave is strange. It feels like... like it’s trying to stop me from going forward... the more I walk, the harder it gets...”

Bai Yunfei and Ye Zhiqiu gave each other a confused look before turning to Mo Xiaoxuan and the others, “What about you?”

“Nothing.” Mo Xiaoxuan, Yi Xan, and even Liu Mang shook their heads.

“.....”

“Fuck!! How insufferable this is! What kind of haunted cave is this!? Why’s it getting harder and harder for me to talk!? Even my soulforce isn’t helping me! Are you guys using some sort of knockout drug in here!?”

An exasperated cry shattered Bai Yunfei’s line of thought. As he turned around, Bai Yunfei felt as if this voice was familiar to him. As soon as he turned, his eyes locked onto Li Jianren, the one he had knocked a few teeth out from before.

The wounds on Li Jianren’s face were already back to normal, but his mouth was still missing a few teeth, meaning wind would pass through his mouth whenever he spoke. Out of everyone in the group, he had the ugliest of face. It looked as if he was constipated for an entire week straight.

His angry roar gave pause to everyone around him. Even Li Tiechui, the one leading the group from the front had turned around to smile at the still cursing Li Jianren, “Little brother, what do you mean?”

“Hmph! Just what in the world is wrong with this cave, and why do I feel so sick? It feels like something’s pressing down on my soul. What demonic things are you doing here...!” Li Jianren’s

right hand pressed against the cave to support himself. He stooped down from the waist, and his face was extremely red as he tried to catch his breath.

Li Tiechui quirked his lips to reveal a good-natured smile, but the light in his eyes contrasted starkly, “Hehe, I’ve said before. When you step into this cave, the examination has started. This is the examination to test your aptitude for crafting. If you’re feeling something right now, what does that tell you?”

Li Tiechui’s eyes froze Li Jianren straight where he stood. Almost forgetting about the pressure he was feeling, Li Jianren stumbled and fell onto his butt. Gasping, he said, “I—you—what are you talking about?

Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows flew up at Li Tiechui’s response. “So what he means is that... this is caused by the examination itself? To be rejected by the cave is to be without talent for crafting? How mysterious? Is there really an examination like this?”

Looking at everyone, Li Tiechui cleared his throat and began to speak, “Well then. Since we already have a few people at their limits, I’ll make it clear to everyone. This cave is used to test a person’s talent for crafting by use of some ‘tools.’ The higher their talent, the more ‘it’ accepts the person, but if the person’s talent is insufficient, then they’ll be rejected to the point where further advancement is impossible. No matter how impossible you might think this is, this is your reality.”

“For those being rejected, you’d need not worry. It won’t hurt you. As long as you retreat, you’ll feel yourself back to normal, but that also means you’ve lost your chance to join the Crafting School...” Li Tiechui could see some of the people in front of him were losing their strength already.

“The ability to go farther in also depends on your determination, but it ultimately depends on your aptitude. I’m sure senior Song Lin has told you before, but power is not the determining cause

here. Even if you fail to join the Crafting School, joining another school would still be a very high achievement.”

“Well then, let’s continue on! If you feel unable to continue, one of our students will escort you out. There’s no need to cause a racket!”

.....

After learning about the ‘mystical’ cave, everyone was thrown into a period of silence. Some of them chose to grit their teeth and continue forward with uneven steps.

At last, ten minutes later, the very first person to drop out appeared.

Li Jianren was the first to be eliminated. The one with the lowest potential to join the Crating School was somehow the late-stage Soul Warrior with the ‘best’ talent for the elemental fire!

It went without saying that he was a tough one. He had continued to walk through the cave until in the very end, he was knocked unconscious by the pressure and carried away by a student.

By the time Li Jianren was being carried out of the mountain, Bai Yunfei himself began to feel quite unwell. He wasn’t being sympathetic to Li Jianren, but rather he was starting that ‘pressure’ himself...

“Am I lacking in talent then...?”

Disappointment began to flood Bai Yunfei’s mind for a brief moment before he pushed those thoughts away and started to console himself. “It’s only a small feeling, that’s all! Maybe the finish line is right ahead, I’ll make it!”

Li Jianren’s disqualification had been the start of an infection. Not even a hundred meters later, several more people began to drop out, and soon enough, practically every ten steps led to another person dropping out!

“Brother Bai, how’re you feeling?” Ye Zhiqiu had taken note of the change that fell over Bai Yunfei and asked.

His face was a little flushed from exertion, but Bai Yunfei managed to wave his hand nonchalantly, “It’s nothing.”

.....

The speed at which the group was moving at was slower than before, and the people walking in the group was reduced to a terribly tiny amount. After half an hour of walking, not even a hundred people were left standing behind Li Tiechui!

At last did the end finally come. Bai Yunfei’s entire forehead was already slick with sweat when Li Tiechui stopped in his tracks. Looking up, Bai Yunfei realized that they were met with a fork in the cave—this would be the very first fork they came across in this cave.

Standing before the turn, Li Tiechui turned around to smile at the people behind him, “Well then, the examination will conclude here. Everyone, I would like to congratulate you all for having the right to join our school!”

“.....” Not a single person talked about their shock.

Was the crafting examination really going to end just like that!?

Chapter 191: Ye Zhiqiu (First)

Everyone was still in a daze when they were led out of the cave by Li Tiechui. Many of the people hadn't even realized that they were being led out of the cave!

Now that he was outside, Bai Yunfei let out a sigh of relief, "Looks like I passed..."

By his side, Zhong Xuhao was taking in large exasperated gasps of air. His entire forehead was wet with sweat, but his eyes reflected no small amount of joy.

"Haha, I—I did it! I passed! Doesn't that mean I'm... I'm finally a student of the Crafting School!?" Zhong Xuhao managed to bring his head up to ask.

Bai Yunfei and Ye Zhiqiu were silent. The both of them were skeptical and felt that there was no way this examination would be that easy.

They were right.

As soon as Li Tiechui directed Xiao Nanren and several other students to lead the drop outs down the mountain, he turned back to face the passing applicants. Smiling, he said out loud, "Haha! Not bad! This time, ninety-six people have passed the preliminaries!"

"Yes, you didn't hear wrong. This exam was only a preliminary one. You are all aware that the Crafting School is split up into the outer and inner school, I'm sure. All of you who stand here have the right to join the outer school, but the inner school won't be so easy to join. In three days, we will have another examination to see who will be entering the inner school and who will remain in the outer school..."

"Until then, you'll all be resting in the Western Point. Prepare yourself accordingly for the true examination!"

.....

The sun was setting beneath the mountains by now. With dusk coming, the golden afterglow of the sun brushed the landscape a golden hue, leaving anyone that bore witness to it with a distracted look.

Bai Yunfei sighed as he watched the dejected drop-outs walk down the mountain. As they were led away by Xiao Nanren, Bai Yunfei finally realized what it meant to ‘be able to see the mountain path’ so clearly. These people came up the mountains with great expectations, but now they were leaving the mountain in silence.

Some of these people were late-stage Soul Warriors, and even Li Jianren was considered to have the ‘best’ talent in terms of affinity.

Yet, here he was being led away from the school...

“The Crafting School’s examinations are extremely precise...” Bai Yunfei turned back to look at the cave in thought.

The ninety-six people that passed were later led to the Western Point and several courtyards to rest. Song Lin himself came before dusk to impart several trivial things, such as telling them to rest or to not wander off, before he left.

.....

Later that night, Bai Yunfei sat alone on his bed thinking about the events of today.

The examination to join the Crafting School was far more simplistic than he had originally thought. He hadn’t even had to do much, but he had earned the right to become a student of the outer school anyways.

“Ugh, that’s not enough! I have to join the inner school or become one of the students of the elders, that’d be the best case scenario.” Resting his head on his hands, Bai Yunfei continued to

think.

“Who would’ve thought that that cave would be used to test my talent in crafting? It’s definitely a method that doesn’t overly complicate matters though. It’s magical for sure, but there’s plenty of things in this world I don’t know about. Before I awakened my soulforce, I never would’ve thought that people would be able to fly through the sky and use the elements of the world. Even this strange Equipment Upgrade Technique is something I don’t understand... I guess there’s no point in thinking much about the cave then.

“If the amount of pressure we felt represents how talented we are at crafting, doesn’t that mean my talent isn’t too high?” Bai Yunfei conjectured with some disappointment as he thought back to the cave. “I wonder what was behind that other corner in the cave? Since it’s the same cave, the pressure in that other path is probably stronger. If we went there, I wonder how much longer I’d be able to go on? What if... what if I’m not able to join the inner school?”

Terrified by the thought, Bai Yunfei shook his mind free of such things and slapped his face to encourage himself, “I’ve got to believe in myself! There’s no such thing as absolute in this world. I’ve earned the right to become a student of the outer school, so I should continue to work to join the inner school!”

Just then, the melodious harmony of a reed floated through the air right in the middle of Bai Yunfei’s spiel of self-motivation. It was a sound that intoxicated him and calmed him down immensely. Soon enough, Bai Yunfei was back to normal and was intently listening to the reed’s song.

“It’s already so late, who’s making that—oh? It’s him...” Bai Yunfei strode out of his room.

Upon opening the door, Bai Yunfei was able to see the spacious courtyard where a dozen stone tables had been placed here and there. On the left of the courtyard were several tall trees that were

well over a century in age. The abundance of trees was enough to act as a parasol that faced the sky, but since it was winter, all of the trees were nearly naked. Only a few yellowing leaves remained stuck to the tree, giving birth to a stubborn resistance against the wind that blew.

On top of one of the more larger trees sat a rather frail-looking young man with short hair. In his hand was an emerald-colored reed pipe; the instrument previously used to create that harmony from before. It was no longer being played since the young man's hands were now wrapped against his chest while his head was tilted up. Beholding the brightly-lit moon, the young man looked spellbound at the sight.

"Brother Ye, it's already nightfall. Why haven't you gone to bed? Are you thinking about something?" Just then, a voice called out to the figure.

Rather than being startled, Ye Zhiqiu tore his eyes away from the moon. Greeting Bai Yunfei, who was on a tree branch to his left now, Ye Zhiqiu smiled, "Brother Bai, did I disturb you? My apologies..."

"No no, I wasn't able to sleep myself." Bai Yunfei waved his hand at first. Studying the trees around them and then the night sky above, he sighed, "Out of the rest of us, brother Ye has the best talent in crafting, so why does it seem like you are more sad than you are happy?"

"Haha, brother Bai, you must be mistaken." The other chuckled.

"I was just playing a positive ballad to calm myself. How could that mean I've something to be sad about?" He smiled.

Bai Yunfei's head continued to stare up at the starry sky above him, "Keeping up appearances during the day doesn't mean everything's fine. Playing an instrument to calm the mood can also be a way to forget your troubles..."

This time, Ye Zhiqiu's face registered surprise at Bai Yunfei's words. He turned his head to look up at the stars with Bai Yunfei, but he said nothing in response.

For a moment, the courtyard was basked again in silence. Even with their troubles, the two youths were left captivated by the sight above them.

"My father is the lord of the house of Ye in Freesia City of the Yellow River Province." Ye Zhiqiu was the first to break the silence.

"We aren't well known in the entire continent, but a long time ago, we were an impressive clan in our province. In our golden era we even had a Soul King with us, but these days, our house has fallen into a steep decline. The battles over the years were disastrous to us, and even my elder brother became a cripple. After that, my father began to change..."

Even though Ye Zhiqiu was speaking to Bai Yunfei, his words felt more like a soliloquy. "It won't be long now. If things go on like this, the Ye will surely become the vassal of another house."

He paused to recollect himself. "Before, I never really cared about my family situation. I just wanted to live my life in peace, but now, all I can do is look on at my father as he ages more and more as the head of the Ye. It was his wish for me to come to the Crafting School to see if I would have any success, and hopefully, a chance to help the family overcome our crisis..."

"Again with family problems..." Bai Yunfei sighed to himself. The fact that Ye Zhiqiu was telling him this was proof that he saw Bai Yunfei as a good person to confide in, but Bai Yunfei had absolutely no idea how to console him.

However, it looked as if Ye Zhiqiu felt better already after unloading his story on Bai Yunfei. Cleaning the reed pipe in his hands, he stored it away with a smile, "But what luck I have to have considerable talent in crafting! If I can become one of the

personal students of an elder, I'll be sure to work hard and bring the Ye back into another golden era!"

Nodding, Bai Yunfei smiled in encouragement, "Haha, brother Ye, I've faith that you can do it!"

"Ah, brother Bai, I wanted to as—"

"I've found you!"

A sudden shout cut into Ye Zhiqiu's sentence, causing the two youths to turn to the right in surprise.

The very first thing that came to sight was a single bounding figure that descended not too far away from them. When he turned his head up to look, Bai Yunfei realized who this person was—it was Fei Nian, the one he beaten back down at the base of the mountains.

"Bai Yunfei, I want a rematch!"

Chapter 192: The First Elder Xiao Binzi (Second)

“Not interested.”

Bai Yunfei didn’t hesitate to give a flatline rejection to Fei Nian’s challenge.

“.....”

In what was a clear display of choking on his own breath, Fei Nian’s face began to grow red. Wide-eyed, he looked incredulously at Bai Yunfei, “What?”

“I said, I’m not interested in fighting you.”

“You—are you a man or not!? When challenged by someone of the same strength as you, you should be more than happy to accept the challenge. Why are you refusing then!?”

“What does this have to do with me being a man or not? Why should I fight you? What point is there?” Bai Yunfei was unrelenting.

Flustered, Fei Nian retorted, “Then why won’t you fight me?”

“Not interested.”

“.....”

Fei Nian exploded into another tirade half a second later, “Absolutely not! You will fight me, I need to prove that I’m stronger than you!”

“Fine then. You’re stronger than me. Happy?” Bai Yunfei frowned. “I’m already tired from today and want to rest. You should go back and sleep too.”

“You—”

“Fei Nian, what are you doing here? Instead of training at the Southern Point, you’re causing trouble here? Whatever next will

you do!” A sharp voice interrupted Fei Nian before another figure came into view.

This figure was Xiao Nanren.

Fei Nian was quite clearly all too afraid of this Xiao Nanren; his bravado vanished in an instant. Swallowing hard, he said, “Senior Xiao, I—”

He hadn’t even finished talking when several doors came swinging open. The entire courtyard had been awoken by the disturbance and had come out to see what was going on. Fei Nian cursed silently to himself for his bad luck; he had no idea that Xiao Nanren would be standing guard here. His fight with Bai Yunfei would not be taking place today.

As expected, Xiao Nanren had taken notice of the people gathering around them and said to Fei Nian with narrowed eyes, “Hurry on back to the Southern Point! You’re a student of the second elder, yet here you are making trouble with the new students. What is the meaning of this!?”

Xiao Nanren had to be privy to the events that had happened between Bai Yunfei and Fei Nian earlier that day since his eyes hovered momentarily on Bai Yunfei as he spoke.

As soon as Fei Nian left, Xiao Nanren turned back to address the crowd, “Everyone, please return to your rooms. Today has been a tiring day, so make use of the next three days to prepare yourself for the true examination.”

When the crowd left, Xiao Nanren nodded his head to Bai Yunfei and Ye Zhiqiu and left. No sooner did he leave did Mo Xiaoxuan and the sleepy-eyed Zhong Xuhao come walking up to the two, “Brother Bai, what’s going on?”

“It’s nothing, go on back and sleep...” Bai Yunfei shook his head.

.....

The following three days were spent by waiting. Bai Yunfei and

the rest of the people waited at the Western Point. Since they were all warned to not wander off, the group of ninety-six were left with nothing outside of their own courtyards to stroll around. Most of them spent their time in their own rooms to train in peace, but some would sit in the common areas and talk with one another. When the time came for a meal, the students from the Crafting School would come to deliver them to the group, making life for the group rather pleasant.

There were five points to the Crafting School on Mount Crimson. The main halls of the school were located at the middlemost point, of course. Aside from that, there were the four cardinal points. Each point was supervised by one of the four elders. The grand elder managed the Northern Point, the second elder managed the Southern Point, the third managed the Eastern Point, and the fourth managed the Western Point.

Author note: Why does it feel like we're about to play Mahjong?

On the eve of the third day—an abode stood on the Northern Point several thousand meters away from the mysterious cave. In one of the more simplistically designed rooms, an elderly man who looked to be in his seventies came into view. He had white hair and a stern expression could be seen from his seated position on a praying mat. Deep in his meditational training, his entire person felt as if he was almost transparent in being. As he sat quietly there, it felt that if someone were to walk into the room, they'd be unable to sense anyone here...

This was the grand elder and junior to the acting headmaster of the Crafting School, Xiao Binzi.

Opening his eyes to what seemed to be a sound unnoticeable to all but him, the elder commanded, “Enter.”

The door to his room opened with a “creak” as someone pushed it open. A tall and straight looking person came walking inside shortly afterward, it was the student of the schoolmaster, Song

Lin.

“Grand elder, all of the information has been gathered and compiled. There is no one of suspicious backgrounds in this newest group.” Song Lin announced as soon as he came to a stop in front of the elder.

The elder nodded his head. “Read it.”

“Yes.” Song Lin complied. With a shake of his hand, a thick piece of parchment laden with writing appeared.

Reading aloud, Song Lin said, “Ye Zhiqiu. Twenty-two years old. Second son of lord Ye of the house of Ye in Freesia City of the Yellow River Province. Late-stage Soul Sprite with a dual affinity in fire and wood. The house of Ye is considered a middling power in Freesia City, but six hundred years ago, there was once a Soul King in their family. In the middle of their golden era, the house came across a disaster which led to their decline. Their eldest son...”

One word at a time, every single detail known about Ye Zhiqiu was read aloud by Song Lin. Not a single detail was missed!

.....

“Tian Yuhang. Ten years old. Fourth son of the Tian family from Fushun City of the Snake River Province. He has the ‘best’ talent for fire. The Tian family is...”

“Mo Xiaoxuan. Eighteen years old. The third son of the Mo from the Three Gorges city of the Forest Pass Province. While a late-stage Soul Warrior, he is on the verge of a breakthrough at any moment now. His talent with fire is rated at ‘high.’ His family is...”

“Xi Yan. Eighteen years old. Originating from Simo City in the Clean Water Province. He is from a family of commoners, but at the age of five, a traveling soul cultivator imparted several training methods to him out of kindness. His teacher later died from combat, leaving him to hide himself in a city and train himself. As

a late-stage Soul Warrior, he is on the verge of a breakthrough. His talent with fire is rated ‘high.’

“Chen Hong...”

“.....”

Line by line, the pages on the parchment were read aloud. It was a parchment detailing the information of every single applicant—over the past three days, the Crafting School had managed to scour plenty of information about them all!!

All of the people that Song Lin mentioned had a ‘high’ talent with fire at the very least, or were late-stage Soul Sprites at the very least. After a few more mentions, Song Lin came to a stop.

The elder’s eyebrows crinkled together. “Is that all?”

“There’s still one last person that stands out more than the others. Since he is a special one, I figured I’d leave him for last...” Song Lin replaced the parchment in his hand for a new one. Several lines of words were written on this one, allowing Song Lin to read aloud once more, “Bai Yunfei. Nineteen years old. Late-stage Soul Sprite with an affinity for fire. A commoner from Talus City in the Azure Cloud Province. When he was five...”

The troubled childhood, the nine years of suffering, the Coliseum disaster, the destruction of the Blackwood Stronghold, the death of Zhang Yang, his escape to Jade Willow City, Bai Yunfei’s actions in the Azure Cloud Province and everything else. Aside from the small secrets he never mentioned to anyone else, practically everything else was told. Even his encounter with Ge Yiyun was known in clear detail, but whatever happened after Bai Yunfei left the Azure Cloud Province, it seemed as if the school didn’t bother to investigate any further.

Even then, the amount of information they had now was more than startling. To have gathered so much information in three days, just how efficient were the connections of the Crafting

School?

“What you are saying is that this one didn’t even know how to cultivate at first, but managed to not only gain friendship with Hong Yin, but even Ge Yiyun from the Fate School?” For the first time since Song Lin began his report, the old man’s eyebrows rose in apparent surprise.

Song Lin nodded his head, “According to the report we have... that’s indeed what it says.”

“Very well, you may return then. Tomorrow morning, bring them all to take part in the examination.” The elder replied after a period of silence.

Bowing, Song Lin left the room so that the elder could resume his quiet meditation. Attentively, he looked at the kindling flames with pensive eyes...

Chapter 193: Announcement of the Soul Armaments, Forward!

On the dawn of the fourth day, Bai Yunfei and the group of applicants were once more led to the cave on the Northern Point.

However this time, the one leading them through the cave wasn't Li Tiechui... it was the first elder!

Standing outside the cave entrance, the elder displayed a grim expression on his face. Such was his aura that everyone gathered in front of him didn't even dare breathe, let alone whisper to one another. Respectfully, everyone stood there in silence and waited for his instructions.

Like the others, Bai Yunfei's head was drooped down to the ground. Not even his soulsense was peeping out of him.

This elder looked like any other normal old person, but the aura that was coming from him was anything but. Combined with that aura, the elder felt more like an impassable mountain in front of them.

"You will all follow me into the cave. Whether you'll be able to benefit or even enter the cave will be up to your own skill..." The elder spoke to the fearful applicants, and with a flick of his robes, the elder turned about and walked straight in.

For a while, the applicants all looked at one another in hesitation. It was Ye Zhiqiu and Bai Yunfei who first strode into action. The two of them walked straight after the elder into the cave, sparking the rest of the applicants to follow suit. At the end of the procession, Song Lin and Li Tiechui followed after them.

It wasn't long before the group arrived at the fork from before. Like the last time, Bai Yunfei could feel an abnormally strong amount of pressure emanating from the place, but he had long since prepared for this. Steeling his face so that no emotion

showed, Bai Yunfei managed to step across. Zhong Xuhaoy on the other hand, had already a flushed color on his face. Already, he looked like it was taking a toll on him, but he wasn't the only one. A good majority of the people with them were the same.

Without even waiting, the elder turned the corner, taking a completely different passageway.

“.....”

What came into view in front of everyone stunned them all, Bai Yunfei and Ye Zhiqiu included. Every single person there was so shocked that they were as still as statues.

This corridor was two times as wide as the previous one, and the amount of shining stones gathered here was far more than the previous passageway. There were practically no shadows to be seen, and the corridor looked as if it extended ahead indefinitely.

On both sides of the corridor were two stone platforms cut out from the walls so that they were a meter wide.

However, the most surprising thing about these platforms were what was on top of them—soul armaments!

Blades, spears, swords, halberds, hatchets, battle-axe, hook-blades, trident, armor... the list went on with so many different ones!

With how the shining stones were adorned everywhere, the view was absolutely spectacular!

“Th—these, are these...” Bai Yunfei thought to himself, but he was almost fearful to think of a response. For the time being, his mind had temporarily taken a leave of absence.

“These are all soul armaments!” The elder's stern voice woke everyone from their stupor and simultaneously answered their suspicions. “The fact that you all stand here is proof enough that you are students of our Crafting School. Thus, I shall give you all a gift for your entry; feel free to take any soul item within three

hundred meters of here, take whichever one you desire!"

"But these are only the weakest of soul armaments, the low-human tier. Three hundred meters after this is the mid-human tier; a kilometer after that is the high-human tier; two kilometers after that is the low-earth tier! Three kilometers, the middle-earth tier! Four kilometers, high-earth tier! And five kilometers... the heaven tier!"

Not even allowing anyone time to feel shocked, the elder continued on, "Each time you step into one of these places, you may take one soul armament! If any one of you reach the two kilometer mark, you will become students of the inner school! Should you reach the five kilometer mark, you will become the personal disciples of myself or the headmaster!"

Each word he spoke was like a thunderclap to the ears of everyone in attendance. They rang in their heads.

He waited several moments for everyone to properly register the bombshell of an announcement. When excitement began to show on their faces, the elder waved his hand, "Well then, go ahead and pick your first soul armament! The students on the side will give you a space ring if you wish. For those who haven't yet awakened their soulforce, you may ask any student to help you store your soul armament!"

Having finished what he wanted to say, the elder nodded his head to Song Lin and Li Tiechui from the sidelines. Folding his arms against his chest, the man waited off to the side for the others to make their move.

After a short moment of hesitation, the crowd finally began to spark into motion. Running in excitement to the two platforms on the side, they began to pick out the soul armament of their desire. It went without saying that no one ran outside of the three hundred meter radius. They didn't wish to take the lead and wanted someone else to try their hand first.

Even Bai Yunfei found it hard to keep the excitement from showing on his face. Both of his eyes were lit up brightly, but they weren't looking at the low-grade soul armaments in front of him, rather they were fixated down the corridor where the higher grade ones were.

"Brother Bai, let's go." The voice of Ye Zhiqiu snapped Bai Yunfei out of his thoughts. He, Mo Xiaoxuan, and the others were standing off to the side as if waiting for him.

Bai Yunfei nodded, "Yes, let's!"

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Rare

Attack: 231

Upgrade Requirement: 62 Soulpoints

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Rare

Attack: 247

Upgrade Requirement: 63 Soulpoints

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Rare

Attack: 256

Upgrade Requirement: 64 Soulpoints

.....

Walking up to the rightmost platform, Bai Yunfei made a quick

look at the stats of the soul armaments there.

It was here that he made an important distinction; although all of these soul armaments were low-human tier, the ones situated farther in the corridor were better in stats than the ones closer to the front.

Turning to Ye Zhiqiu, who was in the middle of perusing the selection, Bai Yunfei smiled, “If this isn’t to your tastes, let’s choose from over there, the things there are much better!”

“Eh? Brother Bai, what do you mean by that? Aren’t these all low-human tier soul armaments?” Mo Xiaoxuan was just in the middle of looking over a small shortblade when he heard Bai Yunfei speak to Ye Zhiqiu. Despite his confusion, the young boy followed the two.

“They are all low-human tier, but even those have differences in quality between them. Believe me, let’s go to the end of this area.” Bai Yunfei explained.

Without bothering to explain, Bai Yunfei strode ahead so that the others had to follow after him.

Three hundred meters ahead, several figures had already picked out a soul armament and were moving on. When they started to move, the others hurriedly picked out a soul armament and followed suit.

.....

To the soul cultivators of the world, soul armaments were priceless treasures to behold, but here in this cave, they were laid out and displayed as if they were no better than a radish or cabbage for sale. The applicants here were no longer applicants hoping to join the Crafting School, right now, they looked more like people buying groceries at a market.

As the group walked forward, they all looked as if they had forgotten that they were in the middle of an examination.

Practically everyone had already chosen their first soul armament, but it wasn't as hectic as one might expect. Everyone was exceedingly quiet, and only a few words were exchanged between the applicants without much trouble.

Not long after, the group reached the eight hundred meter mark before the very first unforeseen development came up.

"Brother Bai, I—I can't move!" Zhong Xuhao cried out. His face was flush, and his nose was dripping with sweat. Both of his hands rested on his knees as he doubled over to breath. It seemed as if he had only just finished running for some distance.

"Brother Bai, I... I feel tired too..." Like Zhong Xuhao, Liu Mang looked rather tired as well.

At the same time, twenty other people were starting to look unwell.

Hardening his face, Bai Yunfei turned his head to look at Mo Xiaoxuan and the other ones that were trying their best to continue. "You can do it!" He urged, "We'll reach the one kilometer mark soon, there'll be better human tier soul armaments!"

The temptation of such soul armaments had worked somewhat on their emotions. Zhong Xuhao and Liu Mang both gained a look of expectation on their faces before they grit their teeth and walked on.

In honesty, Bai Yunfei was feeling slightly agonized as well. He had done well to make it so it wasn't showing on his face, but the pressure that was amounting on him was already enough for his breath to start hitching up somewhat.

"I'm not even at the one kilometer mark yet and I'm already like this. There's almost a dozen people that're in better shape than I am. My talent in crafting isn't better than theirs then!" Bai Yunfei turned to look at Ye Zhiqiu, who was completely unaffected still.

With so many people walking ahead of him without a problem, Bai Yunfei felt rather disappointed with himself.

“Does this mean I don’t have what it takes to join the inner school...?”

Chapter 194: I Won't! (First)

By the nine hundred meter mark, two applicants gave up.

By 1.2 kilometers, ten more dropped out.

By 1.6 kilometers, Zhong Xuhao was among the next sixteen to give up.

By 1.8 kilometers, Liu Mang joined the next twenty-four to abandon the path.

.....

“Two kilometers!!”

With grit teeth, Bai Yunfei took yet another step to arrive at the zone required to become a student of the inner school.

“Wh—wheww...” His right hand fell on top of the platform with the low-earth tier soul armaments. Even now, Bai Yunfei was panting from the exertion.

“F—finally, I’m here! I’m finally a student of the inner school!” Bai Yunfei yelled out inside his head. The pressure had been almost unbearable. Bai Yunfei already knew that he wasn’t as talented as the others, so his worries had intensified. This journey of two kilometers had been rough, but it was easier than he had previously expected. In any case, he now had the right to join the inner school. That fact alone was enough to drop the metaphorical boulder off his shoulders.

“Brother Bai, are you alright?” A concerned voice asked from the side. Looking up, Bai Yunfei could see the unaffected face of Ye Zhiqiu looking at him. Off to the side, Xi Yan and Mo Xiaoxuan were both in a state similar to Bai Yunfei where their breathing was jagged.

“I’m... fine. It’s nothing I can’t handle.” Bai Yunfei waved his hand. Compared to before, his face was looking much better

already. He didn't know whether or not it was an illusion, but after he reached the two kilometer mark, the pressure that was pressing down on him was much better than before.

Looking up, Bai Yunfei suddenly realized that only twenty-eight people were left standing!

"Out of thousands of people, only ninety-six people managed to enter the school, and out of ninety-six people, only sixty-eight people managed to make it to the outer school while twenty-eight people managed to enter the inner school!!" Bai Yunfei managed to force out a smile. Entry to the Crafting School had been utterly low; the fact that he was one of the twenty-eight people to do so was already hard enough. That alone was no small show of strength.

Seeing how several others had managed to stifle the pressure and head impatiently toward the selection of low-earth tier, Bai Yunfei took in another deep breath himself. Standing up, Bai Yunfei walked over to where a deep-blue sword was with trepidation.

Equipment Grade: Low Legacy

Attack: 524

Upgrade Requirement: 81 Soulpoints

Low-grade legacy equipment were on the same par as low-earth tier equipment. For the smaller sects and such, an item like this would without a doubt be considered a treasure for them. Here today, the students that were capable of joining the inner school of the Crafting School would be given them as welcoming gifts, and they would be within hand-reach as well...

Putting down the sword, Bai Yunfei looked to the others. They were looking at the soul armaments as well, but he spoke up anyways, "Let's go further in. The further in we go, the stronger the soul armaments..."

If he was going to be honest with himself, Bai Yunfei didn't really think he could make it to the three kilometer mark and become a disciple of the headmaster or the disciple, but for the sake of picking out a super powerful offensive weapon or a strong defensive weapon, he'd do his best to get as far as his feet could take him.

Ye Zhiqiu nodded his head, "Yes, let's go on then..."

Seeing how Ye Zhiqiu could walk ahead without a problem, Bai Yunfei felt slightly jealous of him, "Maybe he'll... be the one to become a disciple of the first elder or the headmaster?"

.....

By 2.6 kilometers, another five dropped out.

By 3.1 kilometers, Mo Xiaoxuan and Xi Yan were among the dozen that stopped there. It seemed that the desire to grab hold of a mid-earth tier soul armament had been enough to keep them going to this point, but after they reached that hallmark, their will to continue wasn't enough...

What had been most unexpected was the fact that Bai Yunfei—who looked as if he was on the very brink of collapsing—was able to reach the 3.5 kilometer mark!

Equipment Grade: Middle Legacy

Attack: 832

Upgrade Requirement: 90 Soulpoints

His hands laid on top of a golden spear, but he was reluctant to pick it up. Turning around, he look farther ahead—just under two kilometers in front of him, a sparkling platform holding a selection of soul armaments could be seen. This platform was only several meters at its largest point.

When he looked up, the glint of something there caught Bai

Yunfei's eyes, causing him to light up; just two hundred meters away, a golden arm bracer was placed on top of the platform. With the light from the shining stones, the bracer was lit up extra-nice.

"A bracer! I have to have it!" Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up at the sight of the object. Since the start of his journey, defensive-type soul armaments had been the rarest to find. Thus, the sight of one now made every single other soul armament he found pale in comparison; today, he was as happy as he could be. Now that this bracer was in front of him, Bai Yunfei was determined to obtain it.

Three hundred meters ago, Bai Yunfei had Ye Zhiqiu go ahead since he himself was walking at a slower pace. As of right now, only six people were struggling to travel ahead. Several hundreds of meters ahead, Ye Zhiqiu had already walked to the four kilometer zone. Unexpectedly, there was also a fair-skinned young man next to Ye Zhiqiu. Just vaguely, Bai Yunfei could remember his name to be Tian Yuhang, the only one left with the 'best' talent in the fire affinity.

Exhaling, Bai Yunfei circulated his soulforce once more so that the warmth of the elemental fire could spread within his body. Evaporating the sweat that was collecting on his skin, Bai Yunfei then urged the soulforce into his legs so that he could continue walking.

With each step, another step was taken. One by one, Bai Yunfei walked...

A hundred fifty meters remained.

A hundred twenty...

A hundred meters now...

If this were any ordinary situation, Bai Yunfei could have used the Wave Treading Steps to traverse such a small distance like this, but since it was not, it took Bai Yunfei several minutes to travel the same length. Each step he took lagged behind the previous one

with increasing time in between. His back was stooped now, and it looked as if he was holding a six hundred kilogram rock on his back. Even his sense of reality was starting to grow warped; his surroundings were starting to blur, and his eyes could only hone in on the dark-golden bracer in front of him.

“I can do this! I can... I will do this!!”

His mind continued to echo with roars of encouragement, and even Bai Yunfei’s lips were starting to bleed from when his teeth bit down on them from exertion. His face was twitching slightly as his mood began to affect it.

He would not fail here!!

He was well aware of his state of affair, but even though he was at the very limits of his body, his mind refused to give up with a burning passion!

He refused to experience ‘failure!’

Ever since he had awoken his soulforce and obtained the help of Ge Yiyun of the Fate School, Bai Yunfei had been able to embark on the path of a soul cultivator. In a short half year, he was able to go from an ordinary commoner to a late-stage Soul Sprite. Combined with the Equipment Upgrade Technique to create even stronger pieces of equipment, Bai Yunfei was so proud of his achievements it practically bordered arrogance. But still—

—what genius could say they had done the same as he!?

Ever since he had learned of the Crafting School’s existence, he had decided that nothing would suit him better than joining it. No matter how far he had to walk, it was all so that he could grow as strong as he had promised he’d be at the very start of his story.

Indeed, ever since the start of the examinations to enter the Crafting School, Bai Yunfei had been plagued with a sense of disappointment. Against the false illusion that was ‘talent,’ Bai Yunfei had been completely dependent on the help of the Upgrade

Technique. When he looked to Ye Zhiqiu, his equal, and Tian Yuhang, someone even weaker than he was, Bai Yunfei was nowhere near their level in talent for ‘crafting.’ Such a thought had plagued him consistently without fail.

The way things were now, progressing farther into the cave would be extremely difficult for him, if not impossible. He knew that he’d be unable to gain the right to be a disciple now, so he’d have to quash his disappointment and settle for the second best thing. As long as he could walk just a little bit more, he’d be able to obtain an even stronger soul armament. A high-earth tier armament was beyond hope, but he’d be able to get that bracer just two hundred meters ahead of him.

Even though the bracer was within sights now, his leg were refusing to listen to his mind. They were like stone and lifting them was incredibly difficult to do. His body felt as if it had been entangled in some sort of viscous liquid that made progression all but impossible.

“Ten steps! I just need ten more steps! I can’t give up here, I just can’t!”

Chapter 195: Ending and Profit! (Second)

“Ten steps! I just need ten more steps! I can’t give up here, I just can’t!”

Howling almost furiously to himself, Bai Yunfei stalked forward with soulforce coursing rapidly through his body so that it’d move his legs forcibly.

His right foot lifted up ever so much, and with a forward motion, his leg stepped back down onto the ground!

“Even if I can’t become a disciple. Even if I can’t take a high-earth tier soul armament. I will take this bracer!” Blood streamed forth from Bai Yunfei’s mouth in a steady flow now. Grunting, he took another three steps forward!

The air around him was starting to heat up; his sweat was evaporating as quickly as it was appearing. In Bai Yunfei’s eyes, determination and grit shined brightly.

“How could I stop here? Why should I stop here!? I can’t stop here! I won’t stop here!!” Bai Yunfei howled yet again to himself. By now, his vision was so blurry that Bai Yunfei felt like he’d come crashing to the ground any second now.

“Haaa!!!” Bai Yunfei howled out loud. A furious burst of soulforce exploded forth from his body and materialized into a brilliant pyre that surrounded both his surroundings and his very person!

“Clak! Clak! Clak! Clak...” The clattering sounds of footsteps echoed through the cave, and not before long, a hand extended from the burning pyre that followed the footsteps and closed around the dark-golden bracer!!

.....

.....

Early the next morning, the morning wind was only just starting

to caress the world beneath it. The previous day had brought rain to the world, and today had not quite yet recovered from it. Therefore, the sky was still cloudy.

There was one person who sat on top of a giant boulder roughly several kilometers away from the courtyards in the Western Point. This figure sat by himself in solitude and looked up at the sky as if he were disappointed at something.

It was Bai Yunfei.

.....

Barely half an hour passed by before a sigh escaped from between Bai Yunfei's lips. Returning his gaze to the newly-acquired dark-golden bracer on his left arm, Bai Yunfei fell into a deep trance.

Equipment Grade: Middle Legacy

Upgrade Level: +10

Defense: 890

Additional Defense: 478

+10 Additional Effect: When defending, there is a 15% chance to reflect 30% of the damage done. The amount of damage reflected cannot go above what the equipment can handle and is ineffective against long-range attacks.

Upgrade Requirement: 91 Soulpoints

There was a smile on Bai Yunfei's face. It was a sad one, but it was also mixed with a feeling of gratefulness. As it were, Bai Yunfei was completely conflicted with himself.

This would be the greatest thing he managed to gain from the examinations of the Crafting School.

In the end, Bai Yunfei had fallen at three thousand seven hundred meters, meaning he was unable to obtain any of the high-earth tier soul armaments.

Three days had already passed since that day.

Whatever happened after that examination, Bai Yunfei himself wasn't too sure. All he could remember was that his soulforce exploded out from him due to his reluctance to give up, but in the end, he still ended up losing consciousness. By the time he had woken up, nightfall was already coming to the second day after the examination—Bai Yunfei had been knocked out for two days and one night.

And so, the latest examination of the Crafting School came to an end.

Of the twenty-eight people that made it into the inner school, five of them stopped before three kilometers. Seventeen of them stopped before four kilometers. Four more dropped before five kilometers, and only two managed to make it to the five kilometer point!!

By rights of the examination, those two would be given the right to become disciples of the headmaster or the first elder. Of course, these two lucky people were Ye Zhiqiu and Tian Yuhang.

If he were to rank himself, Bai Yunfei would be placed within the top five.

Everyone was carried back to the Western Point after the examination came to an end. For the time being, everyone would be given time to recover until the next day where the Crafting School would decide which student would be allocated to which peak.

The Crafting School had five peaks, with four of them being named after the four cardinal directions. Never had the first elder ever selected a disciple, so the Northern Point was a forbidden zone where no one was allowed entry without express permission. The third elder was responsible for managing the female students on the Eastern Point. The Southern Point was managed by the second elder and his students, and the Western Point was managed by the

fourth elder, but the fourth elder had never accepted a student before and had never taught any in person either. Aside from taking in students and acting as the head of the Western Point, he never involved himself in the matters of the inner or outer school.

But no matter what, any new student would be accepted into either the Western, Eastern, or Southern Point.

No single point was higher in hierarchy than the other of course. The only difference between the points was who was in charge of it.

Mo Xiaoxuan had given Bai Yunfei a quick and concise summarization of the aforementioned subject when he woke up, but Bai Yunfei fell back asleep as soon as Mo Xiaoxuan finished speaking. It wasn't until morning that Bai Yunfei woke up and did a quick upgrade of several soul armaments to alleviate his mood, but to do that, he had to be alone first. That's was why he was taking in the wind here at this current moment.

Bai Yunfei had looked forward to joining the Crafting School for so long already. He didn't know that it'd be divided into the outer and inner school or that there'd be a difference between students and disciples. Thus, he hadn't thought about it before, but when he realized that he had a chance to become a personal disciple and that Ye Zhiqiu and another kid had earned the right to be one, Bai Yunfei came to another sombering realization. He as a person wasn't an equal to either of the two, and that was something that made him extremely vexed.

In the eyes of anyone else, being able to join the inner school would be enough to be called a genius, but Bai Yunfei was a person that was always too caught up in trying to 'compare' himself to everyone else...

.....

Silently touching the dark-golden bracer on his arm, Bai Yunfei continued to bask in his silence for a while longer. He closed his

eyes and let out a long drawn out sigh.

By the time he reopened his eyes, the look of disappointment was gone. The usual look of determination was back in Bai Yunfei's eyes.

"Even if my talent at crafting isn't as good as theirs, that isn't the end of everything. I'm not a genius soul cultivator, but I can improve just as fast! What everyone has, I might not have enough, but they don't have what I have!!"

"So what if I didn't get a high-earth tier soul armament? This mid-earth tier bracer will be just as good as one!"

"Not being a personal disciple isn't bad either. I can still practice the art of crafting as a student of the inner school. As long as I can learn enough, I can combine it with the Upgrade Technique. I've no doubts I'll be able to blow past the others then!"

Bai Yunfei eyed the bracer on his arm with a faint smile on his lips. He was happy that such a revelation came to him so quickly before he could spiral any deeper into depression. Muttering to himself, Bai Yunfei said, "Since you can return the damage done back to the owner, I'll call you the 'Returner Bracer!'"

With a flip of his right hand, an ordinary dagger popped into it.

Equipment Grade: Low Legacy

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 761

Additional Attack: 365

+10 Additional Effect: When attacking, there is a 12% chance to inflict bleeding onto the target for a duration of sixty seconds.

Upgrade Requirement: 87 Soulpoints

His eyebrows narrowed at that, "Bleeding means that if I can't even hurt the enemy, the effect won't activate..."

Of the additional effects so far, dizziness, blindness, and knockback were all effects that just required contact with the enemy to activate. Even if the opponent blocked it, the trigger conditions would still be met, but bleeding and reduced healing speed were effects that had to be inflicted on the opponent by a direct attack on top of the already meager chance of it activating.

Aside from the two earth tier soul armaments, Bai Yunfei managed to grab hold of several other soul armaments from the examination. Namely, a high-human tier long sword, a middle-grade human tier leather armor, and a low-human tier dagger. Even after they were upgraded, Bai Yunfei wasn't all too pleased with the results.

Just then, the sounds of footsteps behind him forced Bai Yunfei to store away the dagger and look behind him in surprise...

Chapter 196: Friends (Third)

When Bai Yunfei turned his head, six figures made their way into his line of sight. Ye Zhiqiu, Mo Xiaoxuan, Xi Yan, Zhong Xuhao, Liu Mang, and one more person right next to Ye Zhiqiu were all walking together to meet up with Bai Yunfei. This new addition to the group was Tian Yuhang, the youngster with the ‘best’ talent in the fire affinity and also incredibly high talent in crafting.

“Brother Bai! No wonder we couldn’t find you in your room, you were out here feeling the morning breeze already!” Zhong Xuhao laughed cheerfully as he approached.

Smiling, Bai Yunfei nodded to Zhong Xuhao and the rest of the group, “I wasn’t feeling too well, so I thought I’d come here to relax a bit.”

“Brother Bai, why do you feel that way?” Ye Zhiqiu asked with concern, “Everyone saw how determined you were that day. Even if you were unable to become a disciple, I’ve no doubt you are someone that’ll go extremely far in life.”

“Brother Bai, don’t be so hard on yourself! You’re the strongest student in the newest group of students! Even brother Ye said he wasn’t as strong as you! You’re only nineteen, but you’re already a late-stage Soul Sprite; that’s something no student in the inner school or even any disciple can boast of! Your talent in crafting might be slightly below theirs, but your strength as a soul cultivator is far more amazing!!” The admiring voice of Mo Xiaoxuan rang out.

“Yea, that’s right!” Zhong Xuhao piped up. “All of us really admire you, brother Bai! You really scared us all when your soulforce came exploding out the other day, haha... you made it to the inner school at least. Liu Mang and I weren’t able to, so that’s why we admire you so much!”

“You guys...” The amount of encouragement from everyone else

had improved Bai Yunfei's mood. Nodding his thanks, he smiled, "Haha, don't worry then. I'm not so weak to be depressed about such a thing."

"Ah, before I forget, brother Bai, let me introduce you to Tian Yuhang. I believe you might remember him?" Ye Zhiqiu motioned to the young male next to him, "He is the one with the strongest talent in crafting out of us all. During the examinations, he beat me by three hundred meters."

Bai Yunfei was startled to hear this information. He knew that the two had made it past five kilometers, but the fact that Tian Yuhang had beaten Ye Zhiqiu was news to him.

"Brother Bai, I'm Tian Yuhang, but you can call me Yuhang! Brother Bai, you're super cool! Even my brothers back home weren't as cool as you—not even my oldest brother!!" Yu Tianhang displayed a pure smile on his face as he spoke with an equally honest voice. He looked to be a very honest child. It really did seem as if Tian Yuhang believed that Bai Yunfei was cooler than his oldest brother. At his age, many kids thought their oldest brothers were invincible.

"A—haha... little Hang, you're praising me a little too much. The amazing one here is you, I'm quite jealous of you." Bai Yunfei waved his hand with a laugh before turning to Ye Zhiqiu, "Brother Ye, I haven't congratulated you yet for becoming a disciple, so here it is. From here on out, you'll be a senior to us all, little Hang here will be a senior too in fact, haha..."

Whenever the headmaster or first elder took on a personal disciple, they were always called seniors to the rest of the students. Disciples had a hierarchy over the other students, so they were often much more carefree with the students. The hierarchy wasn't always based on when they entered the school, but sometimes based on age or strength. There were thousands of students after all.

Smiling, Ye Zhiqiu replied, “Brother Bai, you must be joking. What’s with this talk about seniors? Let’s dispense the formalities. From here on out, we are students of the same school. Call me by my name, and I’ll call you Yunfei, alright?”

“Haha, alright! Then I’ll call you Zhiqiu! Little Xuan, little Hao, you two will have the same as well! Don’t treat us like strangers here, let’s get along from here on out.”

“Ah... I always wanted to be called ‘senior’ though...” Tian Yuhang softly spoke from the side.

That comment caused Zhong Xuhao to frown in disdain, “What a dreamer! You’re only a kid. I’d never call you senior! Even if you’re a disciple, you’re still younger than me, so you’ll be little brother Yuhang!”

“Hey hey! I’m not that much younger than you! Wait until we’re in front of the headmaster and the elders, we’ll see if you’ll call me senior or not then!” Tian Yuhang was young, but he was unhesitant to get into a fight should one happen.

“You...” An angry knot appeared over Zhong Xuhao’s head.

“Haha...”

And so, everyone burst out into happy laughter.

.....

By high noon of the second day, Bai Yunfei and the other ninety-five people that made it into the Crafting School were led by Xiao Nanren to the mountain peak where the main halls were. Passing through the vast hallways and through the many gateways, they finally arrived at an abnormally wide hall.

There was an order to how the group walked. Ye Zhiqiu and Tian Yuhang were leading the very front of the line behind Xiao Nanren, Bai Yunfei and the twenty-something students of the inner school were in the middle, and the rest of the students of the outer school followed behind.

No sooner did Bai Yunfei step into the hall did he feel an invisible pressure press against him. When he looked up, Bai Yunfei could see a single person seated at the very top. His very presence was like a mountain that would command deep respect at the very first sight.

The man wore a black brocaded robe that contrasted with the white-stranded hair combed behind his head. He was a tall figure, and his face was exceedingly ordinary-looking. Only his eyes were exceptional in that regard and they were filled with a dignified aura.

Just this sight alone was enough for Bai Yunfei to know that this person in front of him was the headmaster of the Crafting School.

Kou Changkong.

To the seats below, the first elder Xiao Binzi was seated on the left. On the right was the second elder, Huangfu Nan and the third elder Cang Yu.

Song Lin, Li Tiehui, Lian Lingmin and the other disciples all stood right behind their respective elders.

“Pay your respects to the elders and the master.” Xiao Nanren first bowed to Kou Changkong before addressing the students.

“All ninety-six of the newly entered students have been gathered here today.”

Ye Zhiqiu and the other ninety-five students all immediately bowed to the elders in front of them, “Headmaster and elders, we have come to pay our respects to you!”

“Very good.” Kou Changkong nodded. Sweeping a dignified eye across the crowd, he revealed a kind smile on his face. “Very good. This new generation of students is quite satisfactory. From today on out, you are all students of my Crafting School. No matter if you are students of the inner or outer school, you will adhere to our rules and dedicate yourselves to training and learning our arts.

Work hard for the day when you attain achievement, for the glory of yourself, and for our Crafting School!"

After he finished his little speech, a short pause was given so that he could nod to Song Lin.

Stepping forward, Song Lin addressed the crowd with a robust voice. "I will now designate you all to one of the mountain points. Brothers and sisters, you must remember now; no matter if you are from the Western Point or the Southern Point, you are still students of the same school. You will not be inferior to one another, and you will not be superior to one another. Students of the outer school, do not feel dejected. The results of the examination are not clear-cut designations of your skill. As long as you focus on your training and work hard at learning the arts, you may one day earn the chance to enter the inner school!"

He paused here to look at the two figures leading the group, Ye Zhiqiu and Tian Yuhang. Smiling, he said, "Firstly, I would like to announce the two figures that managed to make their way to the five kilometer zone in the cave... Junior Ye, from today on, you will become a disciple of the second elder! As for you, junior Tian Yuhang, you will be a disciple to the headmaster!"

"Yes!!" Ye Zhiqiu and Tian Yuhang responded simultaneously. They were well prepared for this announcement, but their hearts were still beating rapidly from the excitement they felt.

Nodding, Song Lin looked to the six female students to the left, "The female juniors will be assigned to the Eastern Point. From here, your senior Lian Lingmin will guide you there when you leave."

"Mo Xiaoxuan, Xi Yan, Chen Hong, Yang Hua..." Song Lin continued to list off the next forty names. "You will all be students of the Western Point!"

The rest of the students would naturally be assigned to the Southern Point, but Song Lin announced their names anyways to

make it official. After you leave, your seniors will take you to your future place of residence.”

“.....”

Everyone was excited with hearing the results of their examinations, but Bai Yunfei was among the few people who were stunned; Ye Zhiqiu and the others in their group had turned their heads to look at Bai Yunfei as well.

Out of all the names Song Lin read, Bai Yunfei’s name hadn’t been mentioned!!

Chapter 197: Exceptions and Trials! (First)

Song Lin's announcement had designated each and every student to their appropriate mountain point, but only Bai Yunfei's name had been left off his list!

Bai Yunfei himself was surprised to say the least, and his mind was racing with confusion on the reason why.

Noticing Bai Yunfei's expression, Song Lin smiled reassuringly, "Haha, junior Bai, there's no need to panic. The reason why I've not yet mentioned your name is because there is still a special announcement to make."

Turning back to the new students, Song Lin announced, "While junior Bai Yunfei did not make it past the five kilometer threshold, his talent as a soul cultivator is shocking to everyone. At the age of nineteen, he is already a late-stage Soul Sprite. Thus, the headmaster has ordained an exception and will take him in as a disciple!"

This announcement brought forth silence from the entire crowd for a few brief moments. Stunned, everyone looked at Bai Yunfei and began to whisper to one another as they tried to figure out the reason why. Even Fei Nian and the other disciples looked on in surprise at the announcement.

"An exception... to become a disciple?" Bai Yunfei's mind went blank. Thinking that he was still in some sort of delusional fantasy where he had become a disciple, Bai Yunfei hastened to circulate his soulforce into his head to wake him up, but upon not feeling the 'fantasy' shatter away, Bai Yunfei realized—this was reality, he had heard correctly!

"Senior Song Lin, are you... are you saying I can become a disciple to the headmaster!?" Bai Yunfei asked to reconfirm. He could hardly believe his ears.

“Correct. This was what the master ordained, but...” Song Lin immediately changed the topic mid-speech, “The master himself wishes to give you a test!”

Sucking in a deep breath to calm down the rapidly beating heart in his chest, Bai Yunfei asked cautiously, “What test?”

Somewhat surprised by how fast Bai Yunfei had calmed himself down, Song Lin smiled in approval, “The master will give you three months time. During these three months, you will be treated as a disciple and will be taught the arts of crafting by the master. After three months, if you are able to create an earth tier soul armament, you will become a genuine disciple. If not, you will be sent back to the inner school!”

Everyone was shocked again to hear such an announcement and turned to look at Bai Yunfei with jealousy in their eyes. Even if Bai Yunfei wasn’t able to continue being a disciple, being one for three months was still a wondrous fortune.

As for the group of disciples on the other side, everyone displayed the same exact face, “Impossible!”

While Bai Yunfei was managing to keep calm on his face, his heart was in a chaotic state of being. Confusion, elation, surprise... all sorts of emotions ran amuck in his head without a chance for him to calm down. Silently, he bowed to Kou Changkong and respectfully said, “This student thanks the headmaster for granting such an opportunity. I will work with all my might to not disappoint the headmaster!!”

Smiling and nodding, Kou Changkong replied, “I didn’t want to overlook such a capable soul cultivator. Whether or not you’ll be able to grab the chance to succeed, that’ll depend on your own efforts...Well, return with your seniors and listen to their instructions for now.”

.....

Soon enough, all of the students were led away by Song Lin and the others, leaving behind only Kou Changkong and the three elders alone in the hall...

“Senior, is this Bai Yunfei really that worth it?” After a while, the second elder Huangfu Nan broke the silence to ask the question on his mind.

“Whether he’s worth it or not will be known in three months time.” Came the nonchalant answer.

“Is it because of his friendship with Hong Yin and the fact that there’s a relationship between he and Ge Yiyun of the Fate School?” Huangfu Nan asked. “The encounters he had in the Azure Cloud Province are startling enough, but his rise in power is even moreso. If he started to train his soul since he was a kid, he wouldn’t have been in such a state for all those years, but he hadn’t become a soul cultivator until recently, which made his abrupt strength all the more shocking... But, if Ge Yiyun was involved, I wouldn’t say it’s impossible either...”

“This Bai Yunfei isn’t a bad child in my opinion.” Cang Yu spoke from the side. “I’ve asked Rui’er what happened a few days ago and learned some things. That Bai Yunfei is an upright young man that knows when to be polite. I don’t believe there’s any need to be suspicious of him...”

Adamant in his suspicions, Huangfu Nan continued, “Due to time constraints, we weren’t able to investigate what happened to him after he left the Azure Cloud Province. Why don’t we...”

“I’ve already had them stop investigating Bai Yunfei.” The normally silent Xiao Binzi suddenly cut in. “Yesternight I received some information from the Azure Cloud Province. We’ve confirmed that there’s a definite relation between the two, so I’ve decided it wasn’t necessary to investigate anymore.”

“Eh? Why stop there?” Huangfu Nan asked, “It’s rumored that Ge Yiyun has been traveling the continent these days, in search of

something. I've heard many different youngsters of promising potential were helped by Ge Yiyun. Perhaps this Bai Yunfei is..."

"It doesn't matter what happenstances benefited Bai Yunfei. His talent as a soul cultivator can't be overlooked. When Fei Nian fought with Bai Yunfei, he was unable to cause a considerable amount of damage even though he used his 'Unlimited Blade Box' and he doesn't lack fighting experience. Fei Nian was injured almost effortlessly by Bai Yunfei as well. This all but points to saying Bai Yunfei is a very strong one... A person like this should be cultivated carefully. In the future, he will be a great deal of help to our school. Give him the chance to be a disciple. I very much wish to see just what determination and potential he will have."

Kou Changkong replied.

"Then how about..." The first elder hummed, "How about we have him and Ye Zhiqiu go over there tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow?" Huangfu Nan was taken back, "Isn't that rushing things? Let them get acquainted with things first at least..."

"There's no need. For the two of them, a situation like this will be the best way to bring out the best of their abilities and luck." The elder shook his head, "That amount of soulforce he displayed during the examinations could've set a deviation in the scales. For a genius like him, even a deviation as small as a hair is wide in judgement, and would be an unwise thing to do..."

"That place is where the true examination will be!"

.....

Bai Yunfei, Tian Yuhang, and the other forty students were led back to the Western Point by Song Lin while he and the other seniors continued to explain the inner details of the school.

As far as lodgings were concerned, the outer school presided halfway up the mountain and the inner school was closer to the top. Both disciples and students of the inner school shared the

same residence. The general lessons on the art of crafting were given to the seniors Song Lin, Li Tiechui, Lian Lingmin, and the others to oversee while the headmaster or elders would come every so often to give a lesson when they wished. Every week there'd be a lesson only the inner school could attend, but every month there'd be a lesson for all the students.

The outer school would be given the chance to learn the fundamentals in the art of crafting, but they were also responsible for the day-to-day tasks for the entire school.

It had been mentioned before that should a student of the outer school be stronger than an inner school student or if an outer school student showed enough promise, they could join the inner school if they passed a trial. In the history of the Crafting School, there had been plenty of students from the outer school who had been promoted to the inner school rather than only a few.

Bai Yunfei had been lost in thought the entire time on the path so even though his seniors were explaining things in clear detail, he missed out a majority of the explanation. His mind was still in a fuzz, and the excitement of becoming a disciple was not yet lost on him. The only thing that concerned him now was the ‘test’...

As soon as they returned to the Western Point, Bai Yunfei and the other students returned to their rooms on the left side of a courtyard.

On the morning of the second day, Bai Yunfei was finally back to normal. Prepared for whatever situation the test might be, he was then suddenly greeted by Song Lin.

“Junior Bai, the master has called for you to come to the Northern Point right away...”

Chapter 198: The Welcoming Gift of Becoming a Disciple! (Second)

“Senior, can you tell me just why we’ll be going to the Northern Point this time?”

Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but ask Song Lin as the two walked over to their destination.

But Song Lin only smiled in response, “There’s no need to be so worried. It’s for something good...”

Segueing into a different explanation, he said, “You’ve already become the disciple of the headmaster, so you should have the things a disciple should be entitled to. You’ll be getting an even greater gift when we reach the Northern Point.”

“Eh?” Bai Yunfei started, “What do you mean by that, senior?”

“Ah, well. Junior Bai, how much do you know about soul armaments?” Ignoring the previous question, Song Lin immediately asked a question of his own.

“Soul armaments? Well... what about them, senior?”

“Do you know what determines the strength of a soul armament?”

A blank face greeted Song Lin’s question, prompting the senior to answer it himself.

“Well... soul armaments have several aspects, such as the tracing and the vein lines... you will come to understand that each soul armament has its own special circumstances on the inside as well as the outside. When using or even looking at a soul armament, you have to transmit your soulforce into it. You can’t just let your soulforce leak into it, and neither can you let it come in waves. Your soulforce must come in a steady flow without any fluctuations and it must be efficient while bringing out the most of

the soul armament's strength. The stronger the soul armament, the more these things must be focused on..."

Bai Yunfei didn't really get it, but he nodded anyways.

Throwing up his shoulders to laugh helplessly, Song Lin continued, "It's hard to explain it in a few words. I can't tell you much right now anyways. Long story short, you have to follow the shape the soul armament is in. Sense the difference in soulforce, and use them in battle to get a better understanding of how strong a soul armament is..."

"I think I got it. Thank you for advising me, senior." Bai Yunfei finally replied after a long period of silence.

Song Lin nodded, "As long as you understand. Now, let's hurry on over there."

Song Lin hadn't even finished speaking when his feet began to pick up in speed. As they traveled, Bai Yunfei remained behind him with sparkling eyes—he had already come to a sort of conclusion with himself.

"The strength of a soul armament? That must mean the attack and defense of a soul armament... In that case, I'm willing to bet there's no one that'll know better than me..."

.....

Some time passed before Bai Yunfei realized the destination they were heading to was the very same mountain they went to for the second examination!

Seeing how Song Lin didn't even pause before entering the cave, Bai Yunfei ventured out a guess, "Senior..."

Song Lin stopped briefly to turn his head back at Bai Yunfei. He was surprised on the reason why, but then the answer hit him just as fast. Smiling, he said, "Don't feel worried; follow me in. The cave will feel different than before."

“Oh...” Bai Yunfei still didn’t really understand, but he followed him in anyways.

Not much time went by before Bai Yunfei came to the startling realization that the cave was no longer exuding that same mysterious pressure like last time!!

“Wha—what’s going on!?” Bai Yunfei was dumbstruck. Thinking silently to himself, he said, “Could... could the power in this cave be controlled and banished so easily?”

Turning a corner, Bai Yunfei came to a realization that the countless troves of soul armaments were gone now, leaving behind only empty platforms where they used to be. By the time they turned the corner to the six kilometer mark, the platforms themselves were gone. As Song Lin said before, the mysterious power that had been present for the test measuring aptitude in ‘crafting’ was completely gone without a trace...

About seven kilometers in, Bai Yunfei finally came to see a dead end in the cave itself—

—a few meters away, a stone gate, ten meters tall and five meters wide, barred the rest of the way.

Plenty of carved out rooms adorned the two sides of the cave for countless of meters. Each of the doors were closed so that Bai Yunfei wasn’t able to see the interior of these rooms.

“Junior Bai, please follow me.” Song Lin called out to Bai Yunfei when he realized that he was too preoccupied with looking around the place. Walking to the end of the hall, he turned to the room to the right of the giant gates.

When he entered the room, Bai Yunfei was startled to see five members already inside: the headmaster Kou Changkong, the first elder Xiao Binzi, and the second elder Huangfu Nan all sat by a circular stone table and smiled at the two of them when they entered the room. Li Tiechui and Ye Zhiqiu were both standing

respectfully off to the side.

Hurriedly bowing to greet the three, Bai Yunfei said, “This student Bai Yunfei pays his respects to the master, first elder, and second elder!”

“Ah, Yunfei. Are you growing accustomed to the Western Point yet?” Kou Changkong wasn’t nearly as dignified as he was during the welcoming speech back then. Right now, he looked more like a friendly old man as he treated Bai Yunfei with a warm smile.

“Thank you master for your concern, your student has adjusted quite nicely to the school already...”

“Now that you’re here, let’s get started!” Cutting to the chase, Xiao Binzi spoke first.

Kou Changkong and Huangfu Nan both gave each other a glance at first, but then they nodded to each other, “Very well, let us start then!” Kou Changkong agreed.

It was an unfathomable mystery to Bai Yunfei what the headmaster wanted with him. Even when he turned to look to Ye Zhiqiu off to the side for help, Ye Zhiqiu looked as equally confused as he was.

Rather than explaining the situation, the headmaster’s expression grew serious. Even more dignified than before, he waved his right hand...

Bai Yunfei could only see a flash of red light as if the headmaster was sprinkling some sort of sunlight from his hand, and in an instant, the light filled the entire room.

However, the sight that befell Bai Yunfei and Ye Zhiqiu’s eyes was so stunning that it knocked them into a period of silence...

As the red light scattered throughout the room, dozens and dozens of awe-inspiring soul armaments began to appear one after another! Floating in the air side by side, they began to circle around Bai Yunfei and Ye Zhiqiu in a fluid motion!

“The earlier examination to earn a soul armament was based on your own merits. You disciples today are worthy of owning a low-heaven tier soul armament, so choose one!” The first elder’s calm voice shook the two stunned males out of their stupor, but even then, his words were still more than capable of keeping them in silence for a moment longer.

Heaven tier... heaven tier soul armaments as welcoming gifts—this was the spirit of the Crafting School!

Sparing each other a glance, Bai Yunfei and Ye Zhiqiu could both barely contain the emotions that swam through their eyes, but with time, they managed to take in a deep breath and quash the more rampant emotions in them. Soon they were impatiently moving to pick out the soul armament they wanted.

It was now that Bai Yunfei realized just what Song Lin was getting at earlier. His words from before were to explain how to measure the strength of a soul armament.

However—

Song Lin’s concerns were for naught.

For Bai Yunfei, seeing how strong a soul armament was was as easy as turning his hand over.

With all of the glittering jewel-like soul armaments, Bai Yunfei’s eyes sparkled with an equally bright light as they jumped from hatchet to sword to blade to dagger and then to even the defensive-type ones.

Holding out his right hand, Bai Yunfei’s hand touched at a golden dagger. As if picking an apple, the golden dagger floated down to his hands for him to take hold.

Equipment Grade: Low Legacy

Attack: 2230

Upgrade Requirement: 120 Soulpoints

Chapter 199: Ardent Sun Glove, A Glove That Has Both Attack and Defense! (Third)

Slackening at the information that swam into his mind, the hand that was touching the dagger immediately relinquished it. Now untouched by Bai Yunfei, the dagger regained its ability to float and returned back into ‘line.’

Just barely, Bai Yunfei could feel the slightest of elemental fire circling the area around them. Even the soul armaments had the same feeling. Casting an eye to the silent first elder on the right side of the room, Bai Yunfei thought to himself with some awe, “Just what type of strength is required for a feat like this??”

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia

Attack: 2537

Upgrade Requirement: 150 Soulpoints

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia

Attack: 2396

Upgrade Requirement: 139 Soulpoints

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia

Attack: 2865

Upgrade Requirement: 185 Soulpoints

.....

Nearly half an hour passed before Bai Yunfei was able to get a good look at nearly all the soul armaments there. By his side, Ye Zhiqiu looked as if he had already made up his mind.

“All of them are low-grade Regalia. That means they’re the same as low-heaven tier equipment... the strongest one is at 2865 attack too; that means the threshold to a low-grade Regalia has to be between two thousand and three thousand in either attack or defense...” Bai Yunfei’s head nodded with that conclusion, he wasn’t in much of a rush to select a soul armament; now was the time to find out the most impertinent information for the sake of his Upgrade Technique.

“Well, which one should I take? A weapon or armor?” Bai Yunfei looked up once more at the floating pieces of soul armament with indecision. There were a few soul armaments that he really liked out of the ones here, but he wasn’t very determined to make a choice yet.

This was the most troublesome part—what decision should he make?

In the middle of his wavering indecisiveness, something out of the corner of his right eye suddenly sparked his attention and curiosity.

“That’s...”

Turning about, Bai Yunfei walked two steps closer and stretched out his right hand to grab the floating soul armament in front of him.

It was a single black and purple colored glove for the right hand.

The material was supple and light, weighing nothing at the touch. The glove itself exposed half of the fingers so that the sense of touch could still be had. On the back of the glove was a red

symbol depicting the burning sun.

Equipment Grade: Low Regalia

Attack: 2236

Defense: 2580

Upgrade Requirement: 160 Soulpoints

The expression on Bai Yunfei's face instantly became rigid. In contrast, his mind was in a state of chaos as he tried to ensure that nothing showed on his face.

"Wa—wha? This... this equipment has both attack and defense!!"

With such a huge discovery like this, how could Bai Yunfei not be surprised!?

Up until now, Bai Yunfei had never seen a piece of equipment like this. All of them were either attack only or defense only. An equipment with both of them was a completely unprecedented thing!

Just because a piece of equipment displayed only attack didn't mean that it had no defense. A giant sword could be used for defense if, for example, a throwing knife was thrown at it. The same case applied for defensive equipment. A shield was purely meant to be a defense item, but it could still be smashed against a person as a means of attack.

The Upgrade Technique would only show the 'main' attribute of the item.

Weapons would display a stat for attack, and armor would display a stat for defense.

Today, however, today was a day where Bai Yunfei was shown a single glove with both attack and defense! This meant that in the eyes of the Upgrade Technique, attack and defense for gloves were equally important!!

If another set of gloves were to be compared, the Upgrade Technique would only show an attribute for defense. The fact that this purple and black glove indicated attack meant that there was some sort of special case where it could unleash an attack worthy of a Regalia!

Hardly any time was left to hesitate before Bai Yunfei made his decision.

He wanted them!

Now that he made up his mind, Bai Yunfei hadn't bothered to look at the rest of the equipment. Exhaling comfortably, Bai Yunfei now had a look of happiness in his eyes.

Touching the insignia stitched on the gloves Bai Yunfei decided to come up with a name for it—the ‘Ardent Sun Glove’!

Author Note: Please consult Kyo Kusanagi’s gloves from King of Fighters for reference.

When he turned around, Bai Yunfei could see Ye Zhiqiu currently staring at a meter long sword with some hesitation.

“Zhiqiu, how goes it?” Bai Yunfei whispered to him as he approached.

“I’m not quite sure which of the two swords I should pick...” Ye Zhiqiu replied with a shrug.

Looking closely, Bai Yunfei saw another sword of similar make beside the first. The first sword was glowing with a violet light, and the other sword was glowing with an azure light. Aside from the glows, neither sword looked weaker than the other. Even with soulsense, a distinction couldn’t be made.

However, Bai Yunfei could tell at a glance that the sword on the left had an attack of 2567 while the sword on the right had an attack of 2786.

“If you can’t find a difference, then why not choose one at

random..." Bai Yunfei smiled, but when he suggested Ye Zhiqiu 'choose one at random,' his eyes were looking straight at the sword on the right.

At first, Ye Zhiqiu didn't quite understand what Bai Yunfei was getting at, but when it hit, he smiled and nodded his head, "Well then, I'll choose this one!"

His hand stretched forward to grab the azure sword on the right.

Together, Ye Zhiqiu and Bai Yunfei returned back to where Kou Changkong and the other elders were.

The selection of soul armaments had puzzled the three men, even the first elder gave a barely noticeable nod of his head.

He was clearly pleased with what the two chose.

With a shake of his hand, the selection of soul armaments that were still floating were recalled back to his sleeved right hand. Whenever a soul armament grew within a meter radius from his hand, they immediately vanished into thin air.

Just barely, Bai Yunfei could see the twinkling glow of a space ring; it must be the personal space ring worn by the first elder.

No sooner did the soul armaments disappear then the entire stone room returned back to its normal light. The red glow that was once abundant in the room was now gone without a trace.

"Not bad." Kou Changkong nodded his head in satisfaction. Smiling at the two happy students, he said, "In our Crafting School, whenever a student reaches the inner school and becomes a Soul Sprite, they are given the opportunity to forge a personalized soul armament. You two, however, are already Soul Sprites, so this opportunity is lost..."

Like Ye Zhiqiu, Bai Yunfei felt crestfallen by the news, but then a sudden thought hit him—no wonder everyone tried to join the Crafting School as a late-stage Soul Warrior; they knew about this opportunity beforehand.

He had once heard Hong Yin say before that the Flame-tipped Spear and the Flameblade Bracer were already similar enough to being his own ‘personalized soul armament.’ Thus, Bai Yunfei had been afraid to take out either of the items when he arrived here.

“Don’t feel disappointed. As disciples, there is another opportunity given so that even you two will be able to make a personalized soul armament!!” Kou Changkong spoke aloud, stunning the two students once more.

Hong Yin had said that the personalized soul armaments of the Crafting School were forged from the gathering of the essence fireseed when one reached the Soul Sprite stage. By borrowing the amalgamation of pure elemental fire and soul, a soul armament could be refined and combined with the soul to create a connection between the two.

And thus, a personalized soul armament was born.

Since both he and Ye Zhiqiu were already Soul Sprites, was there still a chance to forge a personalized soul armament?

Chapter 200: Mysterious Space

“There’s no need for confusion, you’ll find out soon enough.” Huangfu Nan explained when he saw the looks of confusion on their faces.

The first elder nodded his head as well, “Let them go in then.”

“Very well, in they shall go!” Kou Changkong stood up to face the two, “Follow me.”

Exiting the stone room, the group walked to the end of the cave where the giant stone gate was situated. Would they be going past this door?

Arriving at a door to the right of the gate, Kou Changkong held his right hand up, revealing a crimson tablet. It was about the size of his palm and was circular in shape with flame-like curves. It was almost life-like in how the curves were shaped, and from the looks of it, the tablet could almost be mistaken for a burning-red miniature sun.

Kou Changkong pressed the tablet against the right door, and to Bai Yunfei’s surprise, there was an indentation for the tablet to slide in perfectly.

Clearly, this tablet acted as a type of ‘key’ to this gate.

Upon the tablet being entered into the indentation, not a single sound followed after. Focusing for a moment, Kou Changkong took his hand just slightly away from the door.

Just faintly, Bai Yunfei could see a strand of elemental fire pulsate and move from Kou Changkong’s right palm to the tablet inserted in the door. In an instant, the tablet lit up with a bang.

At a more detailed glance, the shape of the flames was exactly matched the curves on the tablet!

Once more pressing against the ‘key’, Kou Changkong’s fire

hands made contact with the tablet. The flames immediately separated themselves from the tablet and headed into the door.

Now with his right hand pressed against the stone tablet, he slowly rotated it with a bit of his soulforce flowing into it. Then, he pulled it out while still rotating it.

To his amazement, when Bai Yunfei looked at Kou Changkong, he could feel over a hundred pulses of his soulforce come leaking out from his body within seconds!

The red light from Kou Changkong's palm began to spread out to create a series of 'cracks' on the gates. Starting from the right, the red lines made their way over to the left door with increasing speed and intensity. From far away, the door looked as if it was completely lit up with the red light spreading through it. With all of the elemental fire being dispersed here, even Bai Yunfei couldn't help but take several steps from the intense 'heat.'

For someone to be able to release such an intense sensation like this so another would feel heat, it was only a testament to how adept they were in the elemental fire....

"Grmmmm...."

A deep echo resonated throughout the cave as the gigantic doors in front of them began to open up to reveal a crevice for the group to walk into. The entire interior behind the doors were filled with a resplendent red light that made the entire area beyond it very blurry.

Waving his hand to Bai Yunfei and Ye Zhiqiu, the first elder spoke, "Go in!"

Then he said no more.

Kou Changkong looked as if he was dedicating his entire will to operating the movement of the doors, and Huangfu Nan and Song Lin both stood behind the first elder without a word either.

"Uh..." Bai Yunfei was confused; "I have to go in there? No

explanations? No nothing? Shouldn't you be explaining anything we need to know?"

They said we'd have a chance to forge a soulbound armament, but couldn't you at least explain a little more about it...."

"Well?!" The first elder spoke again as if demanding an explanation for their hesitance.

Ye Zhiqiu gave Bai Yunfei a look before nodding his head to go in first. As soon as he walked past the gates, the hazy red light engulfed his entire figure.

Bai Yunfei looked to Song Lin, but when the male only gave him an encouraging look, Bai Yunfei knew that he'd gain no more information from anyone else. This was most likely some sort of 'test'. He was displeased that the elders were wanting him to go into this place practically blind, but that was all he could really do right now.

Stepping into the crevice beyond the gates, Bai Yunfei came to realize that when he was only just about to step into the red light; there was nothing more to say beyond that. He would be without visibility here.

Pausing briefly for a mere second at that realization, Bai Yunfei had no other choice. Gritting his teeth, he dashed into the red fog like an arrow let loose from a bow.

.....

No sooner did Bai Yunfei step across the gates and get himself acquainted with his surroundings when a feeling of dread washed over his body!

With his hairs jettisoning upright from the sensation, Bai Yunfei immediately brought out his Fire-tipped Spear. Without hesitation, he swung it to his right, only to feel nothing but air.

Withdrawing his spear, Bai Yunfei began to carefully study his surroundings for anything that moved.

But the peculiar thing about this situation was that this feeling of danger had only been for a brief instance. It had been so quick that Bai Yunfei nearly doubted that it had actually happened. But he couldn't afford to be careless either. Circulating his soulforce so that it would cover the area around him, Bai Yunfei began to inspect the area.

Within the crimson space, not even the stone floors and walls could be seen due to the hue. A red fog pervaded the entire area so much that even the five meters radius around Bai Yunfei was a blurry haze. Bai Yunfei felt as if he had been walked into a furnace. Even his skin felt hot to the touch, and just slightly, Bai Yunfei could feel that this 'red fog' was essentially condensed elemental fire. With how condensed it was, Bai Yunfei never would've imagined that such an extent was possible.

"Zhiqiu....Zhiqiu!!"

With several seconds going by without a single thing to be felt, Bai Yunfei suddenly thought about Ye Zhiqiu who came into the cave before him.

But his shout went unheard.

Even with his soulsense being scattered to a few ten meters ahead, Bai Yunfei's search was fruitless.

"How in the....he walked through the gates just a few steps before I did!"

Just as he prepared himself to extend his soulforce even farther away, Bai Yunfei's face suddenly registered a look of shock before he swung himself to the right without hesitation.

"Whoosh!"

There was a faint sound followed by a dart of fire three inches long and one finger in width come flying through the mist and towards him.

"Who's there!"

Even as he whirled around towards the source, Bai Yunfei could feel absolutely no trace of his ‘mysterious assailant’.

“Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!”

In three short bursts of sound, three fist-sized fireballs suddenly materialized in the empty space in the cave and shredded through the air towards Bai Yunfei!

Pupils contracting in surprise, Bai Yunfei nearly doubted his eyes at the sight in front of him. The three fireballs coming at him were completely filled with elemental fire!

But time wasn’t on his side, so no more thought could be put into this sight. Throwing himself to side, he managed to dodge the three fireballs just barely; leading the fireballs to crash into the ground and quake the earth.

No sooner did he stabilize his footing when another three blades of fire came striking from his left side!

“Damnit! What is going on here?!” Bai Yunfei had nearly screamed out in frustration. Activating the Wave Treading Steps, he slid away to dodge the next three strikes.

Again and again, another volley of attack would follow with each successful dodge!

Fireballs, fire darts, fire blades....all sorts of strange and bizarre forms of attacks came materializing out from the mysterious space around them before flying towards Bai Yunfei to strike him down.

From the very start, Bai Yunfei had no other choice but to dodge again and again. As time went on, Bai Yunfei realized that the more concentration these attacks became. Each time he dodged a volley, the attacks would only come flying back at him from the opposite direction. With such a situation, there was no way for Bai Yunfei to fight back.

“Bang!!”

The Fire-tipped Spear swung to the side and clipped a fireball from the right, smashing it into pieces!

Noticing the aftermath of his strike, Bai Yunfei let loose a relieved sigh to himself. Now that he knew what to do, Bai Yunfei's spear smashed apart all of the incoming attacks right afterwards.

“Boom!!”

One by one, the fireballs, fire darts, and fire blades were smashed apart by the Fire-tipped Spear. Any of the remaining fireballs soon crumbled away into a flurry of sparks.

Reaching a pause in the attacks, Bai Yunfei propped his spear onto the ground and inhaled a deep breath of air.

His entire forehead was slick with sweat.

“Wh—whew...Is that it?” Bai Yunfei looked around himself. The red light was still around him, and even now, he was completely unable to feel a thing.

The only difference now was that Bai Yunfei felt something was slightly off now. He just couldn't put his finger on it....

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